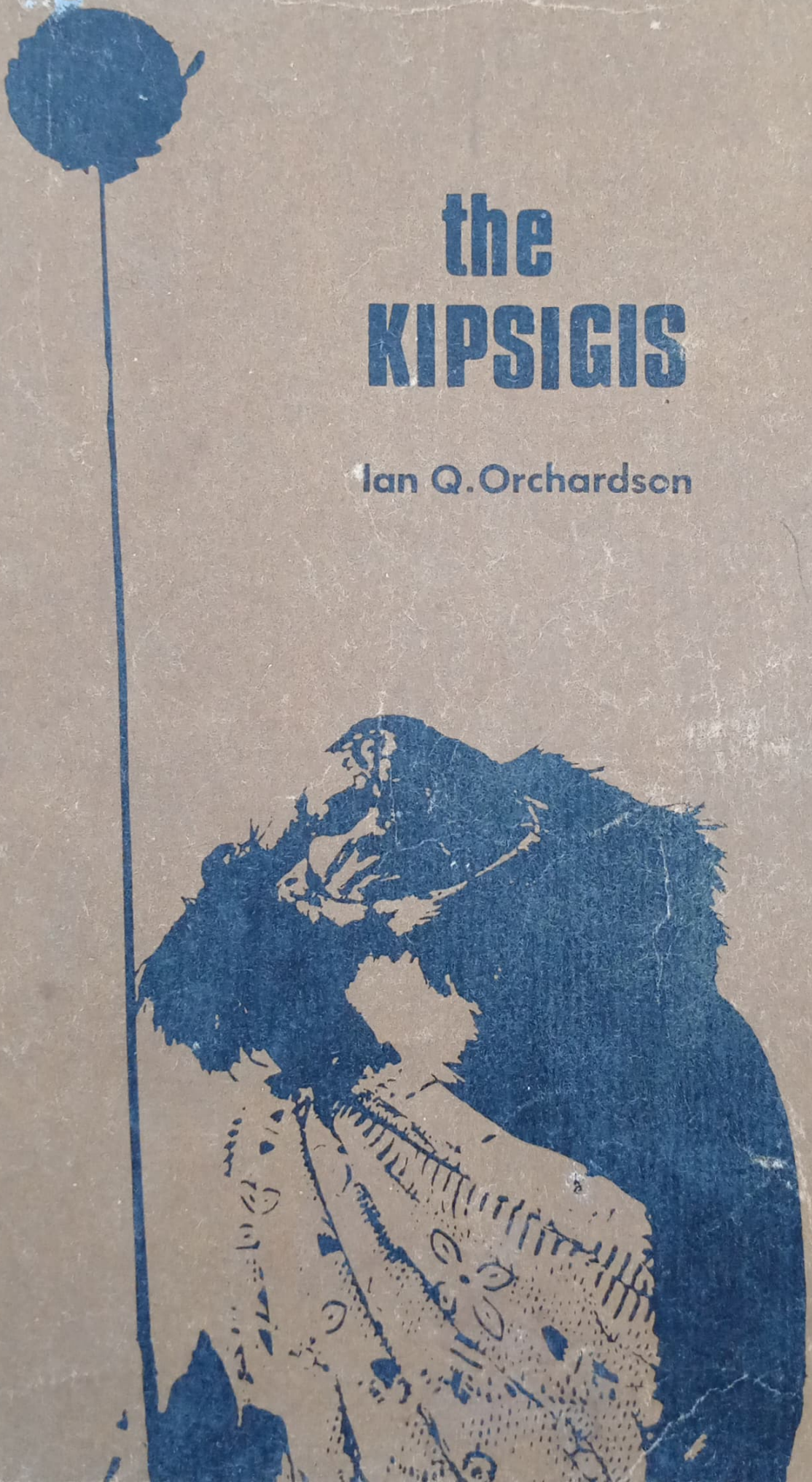
the KIPSIGIS

Ian Q. Orchardson



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THE KIPSIGIS

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FOREWORD

The Kipsigis by Ian Orchardson, as I read it in the original typescript, is an important and authentic document, which every scholar of anthropology should read, for it is full of detailed description of the day-to-day Kipsigis social activities. It has now been abridged and edited by A. T. Matson, giving one a bird's-eye view of Kipsigis social and cultural activities.

The Kipsigis has been long overdue. I have struggled to interest some American anthropologists in the study of the Kipsigis people, but they have all, without exception, complained that they find such a study to be too intricate because the Kipsigis of today are not the same as those of 1835. Credit must go to Mr. Orchardson for having lived among the Kipsigis as a Kipsigis-accepted and respectable person: it is only through the hard way of living among people that one can understand their way of life. The Kipsigis are usually quiet until they get to know 'who is who' among them and then they show how vivacious they can be.

Mr. Orchardson and Mr. Matson are to be congratulated on their efforts, and the latter for interposing here and there some of the current thoughts and ways of living of the Kipsigis tribe.

I do not want to predict too much, but I venture to say that this book is destined to be reprinted many times, especially as more Africans begin to appreciate to study something about the African way of life.

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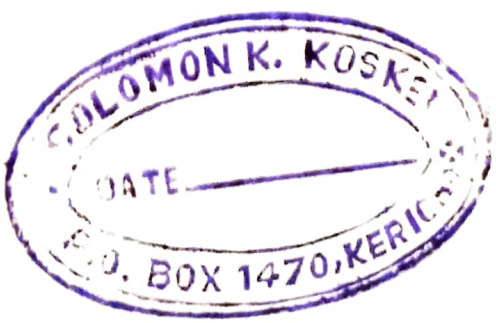


CONTENTS

			Page
FOREWORD			
INTRODUCTION			
CHAPTER	I	INTRODUCTORY	1
	II	HISTORICAL NOTES	4
	III	WAR	7
	IV	ORGANISATION	10
	V	RELIGIOUS BELIEFS	20
	VI	CHARACTERISTICS	34
	VII	BIRTH	44
	VIII	CHILDHOOD	49
	IX	INITIATION	58
	X	THE INTERVAL BETWEEN INITIATION AND MARRIAGE	69
	XI	MARRIAGE	73
	XII	HOUSES, HOUSE BUILDING AND MISCELLANEOUS CUSTOMS	83
	XIII	AGRICULTURE	91
	XIV	FOOD	95
	XV	BEER	99
	XVI	DEATH	104
	XVII	PROPERTY AND INHERITANCE	108
	XVIII	HOMICIDE AND THEFT	113
	XIX	OCCULT PHENOMENA	117

APPENDICES

I	TABLE OF AGE SETS (*Chapter IV*)	125
II	CLAN CHANTS (*Chapter IV*)	125
III	HYENA TALES (*Chapter V*)	126
IV	A FAMILY SACRIFICE AND PRAYER (*Chapter V*)	127
V	THE CHEMOSIT (*Chapter V*)	128
VI	KIPSIGIS TALES ILLUSTRATING CHARACTER (*Chapter VI*)	128
VII	SALANIK (*Chapter VII*)	131
VIII	AN EVENING SCENE (*Chapter VIII*)	131
IX	RIDDLES (*Chapter VIII*)	132
X	INITIATION SONGS (*Chapter IX*)	133
XI	THE CHEPKETILET SONG (*Chapter IX*)	133
XII	A RUNAWAY MARRIAGE (*Chapter XI*)	134
XIII	THE ORIGIN OF COOKING (*Chapter XIV*)	136
XIV	A KIPSIGIS BLESSING (*Chapter XV*)	137
XV	HOMICIDE STORIES (*Chapter XVIII*)	137
XVI	THE CURSE (*Chapter XIX*)	138
XVII	EXAMPLES OF WITCHCRAFT (*Chapter XIX*)	138
XVIII	EXAMPLES OF SAGEYUWEK (*Chapter XIX*)	139

INTRODUCTION

Ian Q. Orchardson arrived at Kericho on 18 October 1910. He had damaged his lungs as the result of his work in England as an analytical chemist, and he came to Kenya on medical advice to take up a farm near the present packing factory at Kericho, where he grew coffee and a little tea. He closely associated himself with the Kipsigis people and in many respects became a member of the tribe, to whom he was known as *Chemosusu*, 'the man who does anything and everything'. He spoke fluent Kipsigis and wrote an authoritative grammar of the language, which still awaits publication.

The first draft of the present book was completed in 1929, after he had lived among the Kipsigis for nineteen years, and the final revision was made in 1937. Written with the insight and understanding that can only proceed from long association, sympathy and an unimpeachable knowledge of the language, the book gives a first-hand account of the way of life of the Kipsigis people and eye witness descriptions of their ceremonies, in many of which he had taken part.

A great deal of the original manuscript has been omitted, as the ethnographic descriptions in the text are interspersed with comments on administrative methods and with suggestions for basing Government policy on existing, or revived, tribal traditions and institutions. As these comments and suggestio s, which reflect the tribal leaders' reactions to the administrative system as it was operated in the 'twenties and 'thirties, are intrinsically valuable, a copy of the original manuscript has been placed in the library of the Kenya History Society for reference. Other omissions have been made so that the work is suitable for school reading, for which the present edition is mainly intended.

It is hoped that the book will provide a valuable description of Kipsigis life, customs and ways of thought, before the tribal organisation had been affected to any great extent by the changes brought by British administration, and also a means of assessing the manner in which the tribe has met the challenges presented to it in recent years. It is also hoped that it will be useful as a contribution to the comparative study of the Kalenjin peoples, and will stimulate similar work by members of some of the less wellknown tribes of the group.

My grateful acnowledgments are due to the administration and educational authorities; to the tea industry and many old settlers for their encouragement and help; to Messrs. Edward Belsoi and Charles Ngelechei for amending the Kipsigis spelling to bring it more into line with present practice; and to Mr. Charles Richards of the East African Literature Bureau for his expert advice and assistance in putting the manuscript into shape and seeing it through the press.

A. T. MATSON

KAPSABET
July 1960.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTORY

KIPSIGIS is the correct name for the people who are often known as Lumbwa, from a corruption of a nickname applied to them by the Masai. They form the largest tribe of the Nilo-Hamitic group, all the members of which have basically a common language and very similar customs. The closeness of the relationship between the members of the group is shown by the fact that cattle have to be paid for the killing of a Nandi, Keyo and so on by a Kipsigis, whereas there is no compensation for killing a member of any other tribe. None of the tribes in the group is referred to by the other members as *punik* (enemies), the name by which all tribes outside the group are known. The relationship is particularly close between the Nandi and Kipsigis: the two tribes intermarry freely and Nandi settle permanently in Kipsigis country, without either the formality of adoption necessary for foreigners, or the stigma attached to one who forsakes his own tribe and tribal customs. It was also customary for Kipsigis children to go to the initiation in Nandi—and *vice versa*—if the time of initiation in Kipsigis was inconvenient.

No explanation can be offered by the people as to the meaning of the tribal name. The transitive verb *sich* means 'find', 'give birth to'; it forms the nouns *siget*, ('finding' or 'giving birth') and *sigisio* or *sigisiet* ('birth in general'), as in the title *Chebiosokap Sigisio*, the women who attend at birth and birth ceremonies. With the male prefix, *Kip*, the word would seem to mean 'people of the birth'. This is somewhat vague, but taken together with some other words, it may have a deeper significance than a mere connection with physical birth. *Tum* is the normal intransitive verb for 'to give birth', but this is applied only to human-beings—and only to human-beings who have been circumcised. It forms the noun *Tumdo*, which is not usually used to mean 'birth', but is applied specially to the great initiation ceremonies including circumcision. Thus the stems of the words for birth, initiation with circumcision and the people themselves all have the same meaning. Initiation is the most important event in the life of the Kipsigis. The thoughts and behaviour of childhood are left behind and the man or woman emerges a changed person from the post-circumcision seclusion. It is indeed almost a rebirth, as the word *Tumdo* implies. Until they have been through the initiation, children are not thought of as being Kipsigis, but as the children of Kipsigis. A word which might have a bearing on the derivation of the tribal name is *mosigisik*, the small sharpened sticks used to kill a man

who has been convicted of habitual theft or witchcraft and cast out of his clan (see p. 115). The offender is disowned as a Kipsigis and killed by sticks called 'not of the birth'. It is possible, therefore, that Kipsigis means 'those people who by the customary rite of passage have been born into the tribe'.

Kipsigis country is composed geographically of three parts: Belgut in the north, Bureti in the middle and Sot(ik) in the south. There is very little difference, either in language or customs, in the three areas and migration, both permanent and temporary, occurs between them continually. The northern boundary of Kipsigis country is the gorgelike valley of the Kipchoriat River; to the west lie the 'Kavirondo' plains and the hilly Kisii country; the southern boundary is the Amala River and the Masai reserve; and on the east the high forest of Mau and European farms. Generally speaking, the land slopes from east to west and changes as it does so from forest to bush and then to open grass covered hills. The hills are intersected by many small streams which are usually fringed with forest or bush. Between the thick bush country and the grasslands there is often an area of *sinet*, former bushland which is changing gradually to grazing country. The altitude ranges from over 7,000 feet in the east to less than 5,000 feet on the north-west. The average rainfall in the wetter, higher land is seventy inches or more, but this decreases in the east and south-east to a minimum of about forty inches.

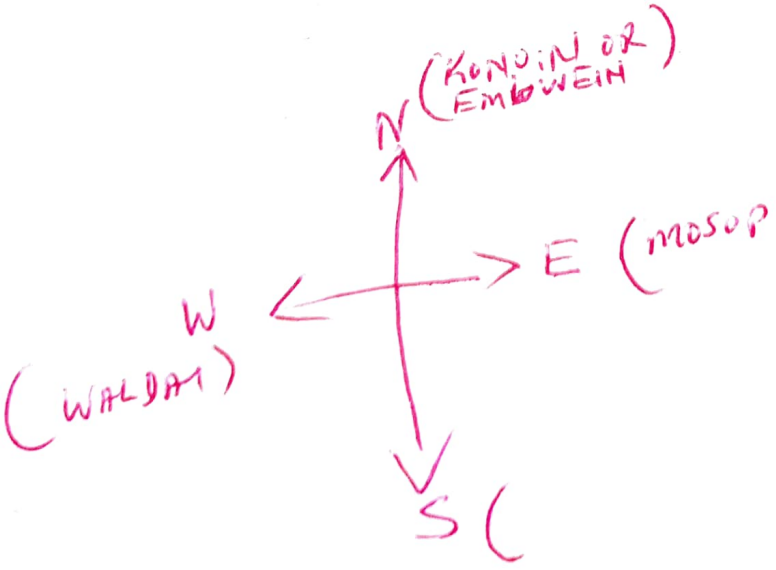
Apart from the three main districts there are no other territorial sub-divisions, but every hill, river reach, ridge and space between two streams—in fact every area which can be differentiated has its name. These names are derived from a geographical feature, a tree or plant, or from some now forgotten man or incident. Such small localities are known as *korosiek* (sing. *koret*). They are used chiefly in describing a route or destination or in giving a man's address. They are not identical with the *kokwet*, which is not a territorial division at all, but a group of people who may live in several adjoining *korosiek*.

Geographical direction is expressed by a group of words, which correspond roughly to the points of the compass and indicate direction, but not position: *Waldai* (Nandi—*Aldai*); *Masop* or *Konoin; Embwen;* and *Suin.* Wherever a man may be standing in Kipsigis country or its neighbourhood, he can point in four directions and say: "Down there is *Waldai*, up there is *Masop* and to the right or left is *Embwen* or *Suin.*" But he cannot say he is standing in any one of them, any more than a man can be said to be standing in the east or west. A traveller may say: "I live in *Waldai* but I am going to *Masop*", but when he is at home he cannot say that he is living in *Waldai.* When he reaches his destination in the direction he indicated as being *Masop*, he cannot say he has reached *Masop*—any more than he could say he has reached the east. As a man goes towards *Masop* it recedes and is always ahead of him in the same, or nearly the same direction according to the lie of the land.

Waldai is always lower than the speaker and to the west. The word

is derived from *wal* ('exchange') and *wald o* ('exchange away') on account of the custom of the highland peoples of exchanging their goods for the grain of the lowlands. *Masop* or *Konoin* is always higher than the speaker and, therefore, usually to the east in the direction of the cold country. *Masop* is probably derived from the verb *sop* ('to live, be well') and the noun *sopon(do)* ('health, prosperity') and the prefix *ma*. When used with nouns, this prefix means 'nothing but', hence *masopon* denotes 'nothing but health or prosperity.' An alternative derivation might be from *ma* (properly *mo*), 'not', and might indicate that grain does not thrive at the higher altitudes; this is scarcely likely, as grain is of little account compared with stock, and *Masop* is always praised at Kipsigis festivals as being a fine land. *Embwen* is on the left or right of the *Waldai-Masop* direction according to the lie of the land, and it may, in fact, be on both sides of the *Waldai-Masop* line. It often indicates *sinet*, bush land which has been opened up by grazing and cultivation to bring in couch and Kikuyu grass. *Embwen* is usually a little higher than the speaker, may be on the same level, but cannot be lower. The word probably signifies that it lies between the high and low country, from *en* ('in') and *kwenet* ('between'). *Suin* probably does not strictly belong to this group of words, but is used instead of *Embwen* when the *Embwen* direction consists of open veldt, oatgrass covered hills or plains. Most Kipsigis maintain that the word cannot be used to refer to grassland in the *Masop* or *Waldai* direction, where the form *suita* is used instead.

Only two points of the compass are recognised: east, *kongasis* or *kongasistap koron* ('the eye of the sun in the morning') and west, *kongasistap langat* ('the eye of the sun in the evening'). These terms are not used when motion to or from is expressed, or when describing where a person lives, but only for static direction, for example, when facing east—*Keger kongasis*. Certain stars are used to indicate direction or to signify time at night: Venus, the evening star, is called *Chebokiot* ('the star of the forest dwelling hunters'); the morning star is called *Taboyat*; Orion's Belt *Kipsomoku* (The Three); and the Pleiades *Koremerik*.



CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL NOTES

THE following account of the recent history of the Kipsigis is merely the outcome of ordinary conversations with old men by the fireside. None of the elders can give the history of the tribe as a connected narrative and most of the legends are scarcely known by the younger men. Though varying in detail, the substance of the traditions is always the same, but any attempt to determine the chronological order of the recorded events must be largely guesswork.

In the latter half of the 18th century, when the fathers of the Maina age set were warriors, the Kipsigis, Nandi, Tugen, Keyo and Marakwet were one people. They lived in a land called To, situated probably north of the present Tugen and Keyo and not far from a lake called *Camos* (Baringo). There were people living in that country called Miot, Teremot, Lutyay and Mwitan, who may have been the ancestors of the Kipsigis and Nandi peoples, or were akin to them. They are remembered as splendid, well-conducted people, and to this day when children are praised they are called children of the Miot, the Teremot, the Lutyay and the Mwitan. As the name Mwitan also persists as the name of one of the tribal war divisions (*puriosiek*), it may be that all four names were those of war divisions and that the Mwitan was the one which went chiefly to form the present Kipsigis tribe.

By about 1780 the rivers began to fail and the country to dry up, so exploring parties were sent out to find new countries in which to settle. Three parties of eight warriors left To as the representatives of the three war divisions, of which the tribe then consisted. On their return, the warriors were asked by the elders what omens they had brought. One party, representing the *puriet*, which subsequently became the Nandi, had met four good omens on the outward journey and one good omen on the return journey. The second had met five good omens on the outward journey, but none on the return journey; this party was from the *puriet* which became the Kipsigis tribe. The third party met only three good omens on the outward journey and none on the return, so the *puriet* decided to stay near where they then lived; later this *puriet* became the Tugen, Keyo and Marakwet. Four is the favoured number in all Kipsigis ceremonies and so the four good omens met by the Nandi *puriet* warriors were considered more favourable than the five met by the Kipsigis representatives. This indicated that the Nandi warriors had found a better cattle country than that found by their Kipsigis kinsmen.

The Nandi and Kipsigis *puriosiek* decided to leave To, but before

the migration took place all the people gathered on a sacred hill called Chepkalal (possibly a volcano from *lal* meaning 'burn'). No one might climb this hill without sacred plants in his hand and fat in his mouth.

Some of the incidents of the migration are recorded in tribal traditions. When the trek began the people were suffering from famine, so the stronger were sent on ahead to establish themselves before returning for the weaker. When the last contingent was ready to leave the country of To, the warrior escort set fire to the grass, probably to protect their rear. The elders were grieved at this action, which caused the death of some old men and weaklings. The sacrifice of a ram and a sheep in lamb with an offering of beer was ordered. This was not carried out and this omission is said to be the reason why many children are burned in the open fires in Kipsigis houses. Other customs relating to burning will be noted later; these may have arisen because of this incident, or the incident may have been imagined to account for these customs of older origin. It is said that old men when telling children about the migration story refer to the Terik (or Nyangori), as they are ashamed to tell the truth of the burning of the old people and children in To.

There is a hill called Tiluap Sigis (some eight or nine miles south west of Lumbwa station on the railway), which marks the place where the Kipsigis first entered on what was to be their new territory. It was here that the first large party of settlers found an old woman making a basket; she told them she was making the basket as the harvest was near and the settlers knew that their wanderings were over. They also commandeered a man who was chopping out a honey barrel in the forest and he guided them to the homes of the people who had gone on before.

Some time during the migration a party of men with their families went down to the plains, where many died of fever. Forty men and two hundred girls from this party made their way back to To, where they all arrived safely. In order to make their numbers appear more formidable on the march the girls were dressed and armed like men. They returned by the same route as they had come, that is, by the high ground about Londiani, and they are probably the Lembus section of the Tugen. Some Lembus customs differ from those of the Tugen, e.g. they make a present to the bride's family in the Nandi and Kipsigis fashion, whereas the Tugen make no such gift. As the Lembus section live on the south side of the Tugen country, that is the side nearest to the Kipsigis, it is probable that the Lembus are the descendants of the party which returned during the migration.

The *puriet*, which occupied what is now Nandi country, acquired the name Chemngal and became separated from the Kipsigis. The latter gradually pushed south and west from Tuluap Sigis into the bush and forest country. Here, as a small party, they were safer from the Masai, who occupied the more desirable grazing land of Belgut. In pushing away from Tuluap Sigis, the Kipsigis ousted first the Sirikwa and later the Kisii (Kosopek), who were at that time occupying part of Bureti. To the south there was a small tribe called Nata, probably

a branch of the present Kuria. They lived in a bush and forest tract called Sotit, east of the present district of Sotik, to which it gave its name. The Kapasiso clan of the Kipsigis apparently amalgamated with the Nata to form the Sotik as a section of the Kipsigis tribe.

The Kisii and Masai were slowly pushed back until the Nandi and Kipsigis lands were contiguous at the Kipchoriat River. It was not until the Korongoro, or early Kablelach age sets about 1870, that the Masai were finally expelled. The story of the final expulsion is well remembered in Kipsigis legend. Kipkeles, a prominent Kipsigis elder, who was often called upon to negotiate with the Masai, went to make peace with them. The Masai suspected him of treachery and killed him. Being afraid that when the Kipsigis heard of the outrage, they would attack, the Masai sent a chief, Lununya, by a devious route to the Kipsigis to deceive them into believing that the death of Kipkeles was unknown to the Masai. On arrival among the Kipsigis, Lununya expressed surprise when he learned that Kipkeles had not returned. The Kipsigis distrusting Lununya's protestations of ignorance, made him swear that Kipkeles had not been killed; the curse was also laid upon him that if he were lying his tongue would be broken. On his return journey, Lununya tripped and bit his tongue off. War was made with the object of avenging Kipkeles and of driving the Masai out, and not merely for cattle, as was usually the case when the Kipsigis attacked the Masai. The Masai were defeated and tried to escape through Nandi. As they fled northwards, great toll was taken of the Masai by the Nandi and later by the Keyo and Tugen. The Kipsigis then occupied Belgut and have since continued to move northwards, or as they say, towards their old country.

NOTE ON THE SIRIKWA

The origin of the tribal name is unknown but Sirikwa still occurs as a personal name. Wherever huge holes in the ground occur it is said the Sirikwa made them. In the Kipsigis district there are no stone remains in connection with these holes. On the Kisii and Luo borders there are remains of dry stone walls, which these tribes built to defend themselves and their stock from Kipsigis raids. The Sirikwa holes are found in the country of deep red stoneless earth. They are usually from six to ten feet deep and from twelve to twenty yards in diameter. Excavations have failed to produce any definite remains of former habitation. The Kipsigis say the holes have been formed by old cattle bomas, which gradually deepen as the wet earth is scraped out. Some Kipsigis say the Sirikwa are the present Kuria, but it is possible the name is given to a number of different peoples, in fact to any previous unknown inhabitants.

Chapter III

WAR

THE study of the warfare of by-gone days throws light on the character of a people and on the life to which they were accustomed a few generations ago.

War was of three kinds, according to the peoples against whom it was waged. War with the Masai was looked on as true war, and was carried on under strict rules, as much for glory and the love of fighting as for the acquisition of cattle. It was played almost in the spirit of an adventurous game, the prize of each bout being cattle. There seems to have been little bitterness or hatred and only when one side broke some rule would the other retaliate by some similar deed. Peace was made under oath and was unbreakable without mutual consent and due warning.

War with the Kisii was less of a sport as each side wished to occupy part of the other's territory. It was further embittered by the different character of the two peoples and by the Kisii practice of spearing and wounding cattle. Household goods and utensils and girl prisoners were taken, but many of the rules of war were respected, such as the ransoming of prisoners, peace and so on. The taking of girl prisoners, intermarriage, and the sale of children in times of famine were permitted between the two tribes, whereas with the Luo none of these things was possible. The form of warfare between the Kipsigis and Kisii and the Kipsigis and Masai was different, as the Kipsigis lived in isolated unprotected houses scattered over the hills, the Masai built temporary shelters on the grazing grounds, while the Kisii lived in large walled and dry moated villages on the hill-tops.

Fighting with the Luo consisted merely of cattle raiding and was not considered as war in the proper sense. Apart from access to certain salt licks, neither side coveted the other's land, as the Luo are a plains people while the Kipsigis are a highland people liable to malaria in the low country. Raiding was carried out mainly after dark, as the Luo were too numerous to be attacked by daylight and were poor fighters at night. The raids were solely for livestock. Women and girls were not taken prisoner nor were they killed, except in the case of uncleanness due to *rumisiet* (see p. 28). Peace was never made with them as they were said to be incapable of respecting the oath. The Luo were looked upon as being inferior and intermarriage, the exchange of children or intercourse of any sort was unknown between the two tribes.

Nandi used to join with the Kipsigis in many of their wars. There

was no war between the Kipsigis and the allied Kipsigis speaking tribes. If some small incident did occur, e.g. during famine, and a prisoner was taken, he was ransomed for the price of a goat instead of for the usual fee of nine cows.

The following details apply especially to war with the Masai, to a considerable extent to war with the Kisii and to a much less degree to raids against the Luo.

Offensive raids were arranged by council and word was sent round notifying the warriors of the day when they had to report to their captain at the accustomed meeting place of their file (*kwanet*). *Kwanet* is better translated as file than company, as the warriors marched in single file along the narrow paths, which were the only means of traversing most of the country.

When they were raided by an enemy, the call to arms was shouted from hill to hill—*Kakobok*! Men, women and children all took up the call *Awem'po ngotwa* ('the hunt with spears'), until the whole district resounded with the noise.

An army is divided into four parts: (1) *Ngaymet*, the advance guard; (2) *Pirtic*, the men who drive off the cattle; (3) *Oldimdo*, the main body; and (4) *Lumwet*, the warriors who try to outflank the enemy and take him in the rear when he is engaged with the *oldimdo*. Spies (*Yotik*) are sent out previously to ascertain the whereabouts of the enemy cattle.

The general term for sanctuary is *saiset* (which is almost the same as the word for prayer—*saet*). Under certain circumstances a man could not be killed. A spear, with ostrich feathers tied to it, when stuck in the ground was an admission of defeat; the victors would not pursue the vanquished, but allow them to retire. A warrior usually surrendered by discarding his spear and thrusting a handful of plucked grass at his opponent. A tree was sanctuary if a man climbed it with a handful of earth, which he threw down upon his pursuers, for the throwing of earth is *mumek* (see p. 26). A man could not be killed in the middle of a river, even if he were standing on a rock, but fighting was permitted in the shallow water at the edge. If a man fell into a game pit he could not be killed. (A hyena also may not be killed if it falls into a game pit).

When a man, woman or child was taken prisoner, the captor threw his cloak over the captive ('protected him with his garment'); the prisoner was safe while thus dressed. The custom of keeping the hair or nail parings of prisoners is unknown to the Kipsigis. Five to nine cows was the ransom for any prisoner. Women were not often taken prisoner and girls only if a warrior took a fancy to one. If he took the girl with his left hand, she became his wife; if with the right hand, his daughter. A prisoner who was well behaved might later be adopted if he was not ransomed. A male prisoner so adopted would take either the name of his captor or that of his captor's father, depending on whether he was of a junior age set or similar age set to his captor. The ceremony of adoption was made very public so that all should know of it. The ceremony consisted in sacrificing a ram, some of the fat of which was hung round the neck of the captive; a ring of skin

with the hair on (*tamokiet*) was placed on his finger and he (or she) became a true *Kipsigisindet*. Respect for such adopted people was strictly enforced; anybody, for instance, who would twit the adopted Kipsigis as not being the son of his adopted father would be in disgrace and might be severely beaten. There is a wide difference between such an adopted *Kipsigisindet* and a foreigner, who settles in the country voluntarily and adopts Kipsigis customs. He is called a *Kipsagarindet*, a word with a very unpleasant sound to Kipsigis ears, as it derives from *sogor-ge*—to behave in an unnatural way (see p. 26). It applies equally to a Kipsigis who forsakes his tribe and customs; all such people are despised somewhat as traitors.

Houses were not looted by the warriors, but sometimes the despised *kiprebrebinik*, or looters, who took no part in the raid but hung about on the outskirts of the war party, found an opportunity to steal from empty houses. The name *kiprebrebinik* was as opprobrious as that of coward. Mutilation seems to have been very rare.

The following account of a war episode told by a former war captain illustrates the lack of bitterness and the almost sporting attitude of the combatants in the case of the Masai and Kipsigis:

"While making war on the Masai, we came upon one of their villages while the warriors were away eating meat. We drove off all the cattle and took many girls with us. The girls assured us we should never cross a certain plain on the way home without encountering a Masai army. They said that if we did pass safely they would come home with us willingly. Before we reached the river the Masai force appeared and cut us off. We were about to give battle when the Masai, as much from boastfulness as from any other motive, told us to kill an ox first and eat, as they pretended to despise us as eaters of grain. Having eaten, we rapidly made formation and gave battle. One file manoeuvred to the rear of the Masai and we gained a victory; seventy Masai were killed and we had very few losses. A Masai stuck a spear in the ground with ostrich feathers on it, so they were allowed to depart and we arrived home safely with the stock and girls. Shortly afterwards the Masai made a counter raid and surprised us when we were asleep in the houses near the cattle kraals. They shouted to us to come out and we replied telling them to stand back and give us room. This they did but before we could give the call to battle they had driven all the cattle away. Some of us followed them and when one of them plucked grass and handed it to me, I cast my garment over him, took him prisoner and gave him protection."

CHAPTER IV

ORGANISATION

THAT the Kipsigis method of government was efficient is evidenced by the fact that a small group of people, migrating from afar into a small area, was able to extend its territory and to grow into a considerable tribe. This expansion was effected by ousting the previous inhabitants, although the Kipsigis were surrounded on all sides by enemies including the then powerful Masai. In order to understand the organisation and how authority was constituted, we must first consider the various institutions and groupings which go to make up Kipsigis society.

The groupings in order of magnitude, though by no means in order of importance, are: (1) the *puriet* (pl. *puriosiek*), or army group; (2) the *ipinda* (pl. *ipinwek*) or age set; (3) the *oret* (pl. *ortinwek*) or clan; (4) the *kokwet* (pl. *kokwotinwek*) or social group; and (5) the family. These groups all overlap and cross-cut each other; e.g. a member of any clan may be a member of any *puriet*, or age set, or *kokwet*. Even members of the same family may be of different *puriosiek*, different age sets and different *kokwotinwek*. Even different clans are brought together by the groupings, as the wife's relations must be of a different clan from that of the husband, although her relations form a part of the family group.

All sections of the tribe are held together by this interweaving. Class distinctions, whether of birth or wealth, are unknown. Any prominence or authority an individual attains is due chiefly to his character, his seniority and the sanction of public opinion. All land belongs communally to the tribe as a whole, with the result that there is no landed class or aristocracy. Poverty is unknown, as every family is self-supporting, provided it does not fail to produce able-bodied males.

The two principal *puriosiek* are: (1) *Kipkayge*, with a sub-division, *Ngetunyo;* and (2) *Kasanet*, with a sub-division, *Kipeni*. The *Kipkayge* and *Ngetunyo* are often referred to together as Mwitan, an old name occurring in the legends of the break up of the tribe; possibly it is the name of the original *puriet* which first migrated southwards. There are two lesser *puriosiek*, each of which comprises two sub-divisions: (1) *Kapsile* and *Muriayti;* and (2) *Kamelilo* and *Murk ap Took*. Possibly these are later immigrants.

Puriet has little relation to clan, as members of the same clan belong to different *puriosiek*. It is not a geographical or territorial division, though it is not impossible that it may have been in the country from

which the Kipsigis came. Since the migration the *puriet* has been chiefly a military division and is no longer of much importance. Companies or files when they are formed, whether for war or hunting, are formed according to *puriet*. In only one ceremony (*Rotet*) is the *puriet* prominent. It is referred to when war is mentioned, in certain ceremonies and in common expressions of surprise or dismay; e.g. a member of the *Kipkayge puriet* who dropped and broke something might exclaim involuntarily, "*Kipkayge!*" Nevertheless, a man is proud of his *puriet* and may refer to it as his fire (*mat*)—the same word as he uses when he refers to his age set.

The main purpose of the *Rotet* ceremony was to obtain blessings on warlike enterprises and also to seek general *sopondo*, i.e. prosperity, health and well-being. Women and children as well as men participated in the ceremony. One of the principal features was an archway (*ormarechet*), through which the people passed to receive the blessing of the elders of the ceremony who stood by the archway. The blessing was carried out by spraying the passing people with *sugutek* (spring water coloured bright yellow with iron oxide and valued as a tonic for cattle). All the participants carried a handful of Sodom apples (*Toogap labot*) which are symbolic of cattle. The significant feature of the procession was that the people were grouped according to *puriet*. During the ceremony the Sodom apples were repeatedly thrown down on to the ground and snatched up again, while the people chanted the praises of their *puriosiek*: "*Nyobone Kipkayge*", "*Nyobone Kasanet*" and so on. ("Capture cattle, *Kipkayge*".) On returning home everyone decorated his doorway with the Sodom apples set in a plaster of cow dung. When the door of the house was closed for the night, sweet-scented sacred plants (*kcrosek*) were burnt on the hearth.

The age set is probably the most important of the Kipsigis modes of grouping. It is closely connected with the formation of armies, almost all social matters, especially marriage, and with the cardinal rite of circumcision. There is a cycle of seven age sets and every age set is composed of three main sub-sets. The main age sets have always the same name and the same position in the cycle. The sub-set names differ in every cycle and age set and are usually given on account of some incident which occurred at the time of the sub-set initiation. When a Kipsigis is asked his age set, he usually gives the name of his sub-set; in Nandi a man usually gives the name of the main age set. A few minor sub-sets also receive special nicknames. They are generally formed of those who went to circumcision about the time of the change from one main age set to the next. When the question of marriage arises for such a sub-set, it is decided in council which set they are permitted to marry, as it is said that they are on the border line between two generations. The table (see p. 125) shows the complete cycle of age sets, together with the names of the sub-sets for as far back as the latter are known.

There has been considerable doubt as to the number of years in an age set in the various tribes of the Kipsigis group. The dates in the table are given on the assumption that the number of years in an age set and sub-set have been the same in the past as they have been since

the beginning of this century. Since 1900 the age set periods have been fairly definitely ascertainable; e.g. the members of the first sub-set of the *Maina* main age set are called *Shillingisiek*, because they went to initiation in the year the shilling coinage was introduced. The beginning of the *Maina* set, therefore, is 1922 or 1923. The first sub-set of the preceding generation, the *Nyongi*, was called the *Kosigo* and the last sub-set of the *Kimnyige*, the *Kiptilosiek;* between the two sub-sets is a minor one, the *Kiptilgarit*, which lasted for one year only. This name refers to the building of the section of the railway which cut off the Nandi from the Kipsigis (*til*—cut and *garit*—from the Swahili word for train). This section was built in 1901, so that the *Kosigo* sub-set began in 1902 and the *Nyongi* main set covered the period from 1902 to 1922-23, or about 21 years. In 1929, the second sub-set of the *Maina*, called *Silobay*, began. This should have been followed by a third sub-set, but the Kipsigis (and the Nandi) elders decided to curtail the main set and to begin the first sub-set of the *Chuma* main set. The decision was taken because of the indiscipline of the *Maina* warriors and because the previous *Maina* set 130 years previously had also earned an evil reputation.

It has been suggested that the number of years in an age set might be determined by means of a forest plant called *Setiot*. Setiot is a forest-loving plant with a rambling rather than a creeping habit. It is inconspicuous in the dense forest growth for a number of years, but gradually envelops the tree trunks and bushes to a height of from ten to fifteen feet with its long thin shoots. It flowers once and then dies. In the year in which it flowers it transforms the forest from an almost monotonous green foliage into a mass of tiny white flowers. It seems to flower one year later in Nandi than in Kipsigis. The setiot flowered in the Kipsigis forests in October and November 1926, probably in 1918 and almost certainly in 1910. These flowerings do not correspond with the sub-sets of the last thirty years. Most Kipsigis give nine years as the flowering cycle, but they always count inclusively so by the European method of counting the period would be eight years.

The flowering of the setiot does not regulate Kipsigis initiation; if it did the period covered by an age set would be 24 years, three sub-sets of eight years duration. Its only connection with initiation is that the ceremonies must not take place in the second year after the flowering of the setiot. At this time the young seedlings are just up and th plants are in a flimsy stage during which they sway with the slightest breeze. It is thought that anybody going to initiation at this time would partake of the same nature and even be afflicted with trembling or a sort of palsy. Such conditions are always attributed to this cause and explained by the expression *kiwe setio*—'he went in the setiot'. The second year is called *Karatet* ('tender') and is preceded by the twig year (*Sigorian*), when the forest is a mass of dry dangerously inflammable twigs, and the year of the flower *Kinyit ap Taptet*). The prohibition on initiation during the *Karatet* year also applies to all new enterprises such as the building of houses.

There are indications that, far from being a propitious plant, which

it would be if closely connected with circumcision, it is the reverse. The common expression *rat-setio* means 'be a spectator, take no part, idly look on' but its literal meaning is tie setiot. Probably its present meaning has originated from the fact that, at many ceremonies, participants tie sacred plants about their persons or around the *mabwaita*, which mere spectators do not. In fact, spectators '*rat setio*', 'they tie setiot', i.e. they tie nothing and are thus contrasted with those who tie the sacred plants and take an active part in the proceedings. Another plant, *ikunggit*, with an even longer flowering cycle than setiot, is associated with setiot in the Kipsigis mind. When both flower in the forest in the same year, it is said that a very large number of old people die.

Girls go to initiation in small batches every year and at any time of the year except during August. Women going through the ceremony at about the same time receive a sub-set nickname, which is used only at the time of 'coming out' and is soon forgotten by all but the members of the sub-set. The reason for this is that a woman's generation is of no importance, as girls are married as soon as they come out of the initiation, and it is their fathers' age sets, not their own, which determine who may marry them. Again, once a girl is married she belongs to the age set of her husband. If a man of forty-five marries a girl of seventeen, she receives the same respect and consideration as she would if she were herself forty-five, and she may take precedence over a woman of, say, thirty. Thus the position of a second wife is very little different from that of a first wife, as socially they both belong to the same age set as their husband, even if one is twenty years older than the other. A young wife of an older man may speak to young men older than herself as if they were children and they will treat her with the respect accorded to a mother.

Age sets are very important socially as they limit clan exogamy and, consequently, cause difficulties in the way of hospitality (see p. 76). No man may marry the daughter of one of his own age set. Normally, he marries a daughter of the previous age set, but he may also marry the daughter of a following age set—often the only possible procedure for an old man. Difficulty arises at times regarding contiguous groups of two age-sets, but special rules are made in these cases. As regards hospitality, age sets create a similar prohibition as they do in the case of marriage: one may only sleep in the houses of men of one's own age set as, to the Kipsigis, the members of the other age sets are one's prospective relations by marriage (*sanik*) and these must be respected.

Distinction of the successive age sets for the purposes mentioned above seems to have been the chief function of the *Saget ap Eito* ceremony. The expression used in connection with the object of the ceremony is *Ketil ipinda*, 'one cuts the age set'. The ceremony has not been carried out since the *Kablelach* age set; when the time came for the *Kimnyige* to perform it, the old men decided it should not take place as it had been omitted by the previous *Kimnyige* age set. The omission in this case was probably caused by the disorganisation consequent on the migration and dispersal of the tribe. The *saget ap eito*

used to take place at any time during the latter part of a generation. It was not necessary for the age set to be completed, so that men who had been through the initiation and boys who had yet to go through attended. Men of the age set concerned who had married did not take part. Women and girls were not included as they take the age set of their husbands.

The ceremony was not for the purpose of handing over the rule of the country from one set of warriors to another, but rather for determining publicly exogamy of generation and the rules connected with it. It should be noted that Kipsigis of all ages, married and unmarried, went to war, with the exception of the very young men, who had to obtain permission from the elders and war leaders. (It is said it was sometimes these young men who had been refused permission to fight, who followed the army at a distance and became looters.) The war leaders (*Kiptainik*) and more vigorous elders conducted war, while all other affairs were the concern of the *Kokwotinwek*. The *kiptainik* were of senior generation to the majority of the warriors and the latter had very little say in the management of civil or military affairs. The basis of the Kipsigis social organisation was obedience to seniority, and there was no question of control of the country being handed over to the youngest group of Kipsigis manhood.

The *sagetap eito* ceremony consisted of the sacrifice of a white ox presented by a public-spirited old man. The meat was cut up and a small piece handed to every participant, together with a small strip of hide with the hair left on (*tamokiet*), to be worn as a finger ring. The distribution of the *tamokiet* indicated that the ox had shown good auspices by its entrails. An archway (*ormarechet*) was erected similar to that used on coming out of the initiation. It had the same symbolic significance: the passage from the state of childhood to that of manhood. As the new generation passed through the archway, they were blessed by two elders, who stood one on each side of the arch, and sprayed the men and boys with a mist of beer. The day and night before the ceremony the new generation must not be seen by others; by day they hid away in the bush and near the streams and at night they either slept out or in the attics. They had to avoid sleeping with members of an older generation, in houses belonging to married people, or in the men's *sigiroinek* (see p. 85). These rules seem to confirm that the ceremony is connected with age set exogamy and the respect (*tegisto*) owed by the junior to the senior generation.

The Kipsigis tribe is split up into clans, the members of which are more nearly related, on the male side, to each other than they are to people in other clans. This relationship is symbolised by a totem, which is usually an animal, but is occasionally some other object. The Kipsigis do not believe they were originally descended from the totem or that the spirits of the dead are reincarnated in the totem animal. The exception is the case of the hyena which is referred to later (p. 24). In fact, the totem is little regarded: a man may kill or eat his totem animal, provided he is not prohibited from doing so on other grounds. The totem is chiefly used as a name for the clan and it is rarely men-

tioned, except at the great ceremonies, when clansmen sing ancient chants in praise of their clan. These chants are so old they are now almost unintelligible to the singers.

Besides the totem, some clans have another name, which may be more commonly used than the totem name, especially when two clans share the same totem. When a clan became too large, it was found convenient to sub-divide it in order to restrict the clan's collective responsibility, e.g. in the case of homicide. Such a division does not in every case affect clan exogamy, so that the members of different clans having the same totem may not always intermarry. A third clan name is sometimes derived from the clan praise chants.

The fact that the clans are not segregated but intermixed has probably diminished the importance of the clan in the tribal structure. No man knows all the clans and most people know only a few; in everyday affairs little is heard of the clan and, except in the case of intimate friends, a man only knows the clans of his relatives. Usually the age set to which a man belongs is known, as this is a matter of much greater practical importance; similarly the family group consisting of near relations, including those on the female side, is of more importance in daily life than the clan. A third grouping, which reduces the importance of the clan, is the *kokwet*, or social unit. In all works needing co-operative effort it is next in importance to the family, whilst in judicial matters it decides between the claims of two opposing clans. The clan has nothing to do with trying cases or settling disputes. The chief functions of the clan are: (1) in marriage, to see that exogamy is strictly adhered to, i.e. that people related in the remotest degree by blood on the male side shall not marry; a man may not even make love to a young girl of the same clan; and (2) to take collective responsibility for the death of a member of another clan.

The clans in Nandi and Kipsigis are more or less the same. Sometimes the greater part of a clan is in Nandi and sometimes in Kipsigis. When the original tribe broke up, it did so by *puriet* and not according to clan, with the result that members of the same clan are to be found in Kipsigis and in Nandi.

The family, both in the restricted and broader sense, is of great social importance, since family duty is the basis of much of everyday life. Duty is owed firstly to father and mother and next to the older relatives of both parents. The urgency of the duty depends on age and the nearness of the relationship. It is taken for granted that children maintain their parents in old age, build their houses, cultivate their fields and care for them in sickness; anyone who failed to do so would be considered the worst of criminals. Even when members of the family are not old, help is continually given as a matter of course by other members of the family living nearby. As certain kinds of work are reserved for women and others for men, the kind of work to be done determines which relatives will do it. There are also ceremonies which have to be attended by relatives, either as principals or helpers, and in times of sickness a sheep or goat to be slaughtered. Some family duties are urgent, most are considered important and others it is almost

impossible, and unthinkable, to neglect. In sum family duties were of great social value, as they dealt with many of the problems which are now thought to fall within the province of the state, and they alleviated the hardships and loneliness of old age.

Duty to parents implies that children were obedient to their parents, and that parents had authority over their children. Nevertheless, children were always allowed great freedom and could roam at large, the rules of hospitality ensuring that they never lacked food. But as the tribe was surrounded by enemies, no child could roam very far and always remained dependent on the parental home. The obedience instilled in the children is never forgotten and is one of the major supports of all Kipsigis tribal institutions.

The Kipsigis do not live in villages but build their houses scattered over the country usually in sheltered places. Even the members of a family do not live very close to one another. The parents and children up to about six years of age live in one house. Nearby is the *sigiroinet*, the hut in which the young men and the older children of both sexes sleep. One *sigiroinet* usually serves for the unmarried people attached to a group of married peoples' houses. Where a man has more than one wife, every wife has her own home. The lack of villages and the scattered houses naturally affects the community organisation and life of the tribe.

A group of people of different families, clans and *puriosiek*, living in a defined area forms a *kokwet*. Although this word is used in several senses, primarily a *kokwet* is a social unit and never a geographical district. The geographical area is termed a *koret* (pl. *korosiek*) and several *korosiek* (or parts of them) may go towards making a *kokwet*. The size of a *kokwet* is determined solely by the convenience of its members; it may consist of the inhabitants of half a square mile or two square miles. The deciding factor is usually ease of communication between the *kokwet* members; e.g. a small stream may be less of an obstacle to free movement than thick bush, so that people living on opposite sides of a valley may belong to the same *kokwet*, whilst those occupying the ridge may belong to different *kokwotinwek*, despite the fact that the ridge would probably form one *koret*.

The members of a *kokwet* combine to help one another in agriculture and in all kinds of domestic matters. Each year an area is chosen for cultivation by the members of the *kokwet*, who cultivate adjoining strips in the area and surround it with a common fence. The owner of any field may call upon the members of the *kokwet* to cultivate or harvest for him; the work is quite voluntary and is rewarded by a beer party (also called a *kokwet*) after the work is over. In the case of very poor people, the work is undertaken without reward. Within the *kokwet* many of the women, irrespective of family relationship, help one another in such matters as the preparation of beer, the carriage of wood and water, and the cooking of food in times of illness, especially during childbirth and in the period of ceremonial abstention from work following childbirth. The *kokwet* also had judicial functions and the council of the *kokwet* (known simply as *kokwet*) met whenever there

was anything important to discuss, or a case to be tried. The meeting was held usually under a conspicuous tree; this council place was known as *kapkiruog*. All adult males in the *kokwet* could attend, but naturally the younger men were less regular in attendance and less prominent in discussion than the elders. If the *kokwet* was unable to decide a case to the satisfaction of the parties, and in some cases the clans concerned, then some well respected judge (*kiruogindet*) from outside the *kokwet* was called in; in difficult cases and at the request of the parties two judges could be asked to adjudicate. The *kokwotinwek* were the sole courts of justice. A decision by the *kokwet*, or by the *kiruogik* (if outside judges had been brought in) was final. Its binding nature was emphasized by the sacrifice of a ram, he-goat or ox which was slaughtered near the *kapkiruog*.

As the *kiruogik* were usually recruited from the ranks of the war leaders (*kiptainik*), it is convenient to consider them first. *Kiptayat* means 'leader' and is derived from *tai*, meaning 'front' or 'ahead'. They were chiefly leaders in war and in hunting dangerous game, activities where organisation and discipline were necessary. Every chief *kiptayat* had his file (*kwanet*), which might consist of between one and two hundred men. Under him would be two junior *kiptainik*, who were selected by the chief *kiptayat* at a war dance or when war preparations were going on. He would be guided by popular opinion, as well as by his own predilection, since popular opinion is a very important factor amongst the Kipsigis, and any *kiptayat* who was not popular would soon lose his position. The senior *kiptayat* has complete authority during a war, or at a war dance, over his junior leaders and warriors. This authority extends even to corporal punishment. In civil life nobody had authority of this nature and any attempt to impose corporal punishment would be strongly resisted and justifiably resented. The senior *kiptainik* were always, and the junior usually, members of the preceding age set to that of the majority of the warriors. The warriors forming a *kwanet* did not all belong to one *kokwet*, as there would be insufficient to form a satisfactory war unit; in most cases several *kokwotinwek* would combine to form a *kwanet*.

Although their position as war leaders confers no authority on the *kiptainik* in civil life, they were prominent in council and developed a considerable amount of authority on account of their character, which had caused their selection as war leaders. The real importance of the *kiptainik* lies in the fact that their authority was respected by the warriors, by whom they had been popularly elected. Further, that as they became too old for war they were automatically recognised as councillors (*kiruogik*), providing they had proved themselves satisfactory leaders in the past. Any other man may, however, become a *kiruogindet* by virtue of his reputation for strength of character, justice, wisdom, power of oratory and so on. The *kiruogik* (from *ruoch*, 'discuss, take counsel'; *ruokiin*, 'arrange, settle, adjudicate') are not considered as permanent advisers, but give their counsel only when they are asked. They make no categorical pronouncements or dictatorial demands, but nobody would lightly run counter to the expressed opinion of a respect-

ed *kiruogindet*. Unlike the *kiptayat*, the *kiruogindet* has no district and may be summoned from long distances, when the case is one in which he is considered expert and when his fame has been established. If a counsellor proves unsatisfactory and is unable to decide in a particular case, another may be called in; in the end the decision is absolutely binding. They have no other authority than the respect accorded voluntarily to them by public opinion, which, in its turn, sees that their pronouncements are upheld. If their judgments continually fail to give satisfaction, they may simply drop out as *kiruogik*. The remuneration for their services in adjudicating disputes involves a ceremony which makes the judgment binding on both parties. It is called *kimagootit* and is adjusted to the wealth of the successful party and the magnitude of the matter at stake. It varies from beer to an ox, but the *kiruogindet* may not take it all away: the beer is drunk by all present; the ox, sheep or goat is slaughtered and much of it eaten on the spot; the *kiruogindet* is allowed to take only the two hind legs away. Although the *kiruogik* were the most respected people in the tribe, there was nothing in their manner of dress or living to distinguish them from others. No one would rise to show his respect for a *kiruogindet;* the respect is taken for granted.

From a study of the grouping of the tribe, it is difficult to understand how obedience was ensured to the tribal laws. There was no central authority, no chiefs, no officers engaged permanently on the maintenance of government, law and order, while the army was composed of the whole adult male population officered by men of its own choice. On the religious side, there was no Devil or similar agency to instil obedience through fear. Inter *kokwet* and inter clan or section fighting was unknown. The reason why the rule of law was maintained, with none or few of the usual functionaries, was that, to the Kipsigis, the laws were unbreakable. There is only one word, *pitet* (pl. *pitonik*), for law, custom and nature. It is the *pitet* of the Kipsigis to do so and so; it is the *pitet* of animals to eat such and such; it is the *pitet* of a flower to blossom at such and such a time; it is the *pitet* of the sun to rise and set every day. There may be no apparent reason for such things, they simply are so. A common Kipsigis reply to the question "What is the punishment for doing so and so?", is "Who knows? It is not done." The laws of the Kipsigis are to them like the laws of nature, which have developed gradually with the requirements of the people and have not been laid down as a code by some tribal authority. Anyone who breaks one of the laws is said to '*sogorge*', or do something unnatural. If a cow were to do something foreign to the nature of cows, e.g. were to eat meat, it would *sogorge* and be put to death, not as a punishment but because it must have been bewitched to have acted to unnaturally. A Kipsigis who stole cattle from another Kipsigis would *sogorge*; no specific punishment is laid down for this unnatural act, but the perpetrator would most probably be killed, in the same way that a Kipsigis convicted of habitual theft of other objects would be put to death. The one universal punishment for the breaking of laws and customs is the curse. This sanction is a very real one to the Kipsigis, as its effects

were felt not only by the culprit but perhaps by some, or all, of his near relations. When a Kipsigis does something unnatural, he is said to *chupge*, 'to curse one's self'. This natural automatic curse is reinforced in some instances, especially in cases of witchcraft, by the public curse, pronounced by an elder in the *kokwet* council. They sometimes say that a *sogornet* is cursed by God.

Kipsigis society, then, is grouped according to age, blood relationship and the associations of daily life. Leaders rise to prominence only through a combination of seniority and character, backed by the sanction of popular approval. The *kokwet* councils, with the aid when necessary of one or more *kiruogik*, determined all laws and customs and decided all disputes. Punishments were few, no officers were appointed to carry them out and the laws were unbreakable. Obedience and discipline were maintained by the genius of the people and the belief in the infallibility of the curse, which inevitably follows the breaking of tribal law and customs.

APPENDIX 1: Table of Age Sets.
2: Clan Chants.

CHAPTER V

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

IN attempting to understand a people like the Kipsigis, there is nothing more important and nothing more difficult than an understanding of their religious beliefs, and of what these mean to them. Some of their ceremonies, rites and prayers have lost their original significance, some have little meaning or importance at all now, whilst others are deeply felt and form an essential part in their method of thinking and their way of life. Briefly, the two chief components of Kipsigis religion are the belief in God and the belief in the human spirit.

By the name *Cheptalil*, the Kipsigis understand a supreme being possessed of a personal nature, who, if not definitely the creator of the world, is the controller of everything in it. He is accessible by prayer and cares for the welfare of human beings, who are sometimes described as being his children. Not only does Cheptalil care for all human beings but for all living things. In some folk tales for children the guinea-fowl is often represented as a wise animal whom others consult. After their custom of putting words to the songs and calls of birds, children say that when the guinea fowl calls at dusk she says *Yagech ngo? Yagech ngo? Ani Ngolo* (an old synonym for *Cheptalil*) *Ani Cheptalil*. ('Who will look after us? Let God look after us.')

Although the Kipsigis usually speak of *Cheptalil* as *Asis* or *Asista*, the sun, and although the east plays an important part in their ceremonies, they do not think of the sun as being God but only as a symbol for God. The derivation of the word *Cheptalil* is not known; it is evidently not the sun, as the guinea-fowl asks for his protection through the night; it is evidently personal, as men are referred to as his children. When the name *Asista* is used, the idea of personality is still retained. *Cheptalil* is benign, the protector and helper of man, and has none of the attributes of the Devil. Sometimes major ills, such as droughts, famines and epidemics, are ascribed to his anger, but personal troubles, such as sickness and the like, are ascribed to the bad conduct of the sufferer; in such cases, the person is punished by a human spirit related to him, or by the person whom he has ill-treated. On the other hand, prayers are made to God for relief from calamities and sickness, both in the case of communities and individuals. Thanks are also offered to God for respite and recovery, as 'it is not good to ask and then to forget to thank.'

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CHAPTER V

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

IN attempting to understand a people like the Kipsigis, there is nothing more important and nothing more difficult than an understanding of their religious beliefs, and of what these mean to them. Some of their ceremonies, rites and prayers have lost their original significance, some have little meaning or importance at all now, whilst others are deeply felt and form an essential part in their method of thinking and their way of life. Briefly, the two chief components of Kipsigis religion are the belief in God and the belief in the human spirit.

By the name *Cheptalil*, the Kipsigis understand a supreme being possessed of a personal nature, who, if not definitely the creator of the world, is the controller of everything in it. He is accessible by prayer and cares for the welfare of human beings, who are sometimes described as being his children. Not only does Cheptalil care for all human beings but for all living things. In some folk tales for children the guinea-fowl is often represented as a wise animal whom others consult. After their custom of putting words to the songs and calls of birds, children say that when the guinea fowl calls at dusk she says *Yagech ngo? Yagech ngo? Ani Ngolo* (an old synonym for *Cheptalil*) *Ani Cheptalil*. ('Who will look after us? Let God look after us.')

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Prayers are raised to God not only at ceremonies but also at council meetings, private parties and personally, especially when a relation or

friend is sick or troubled. Prayers of this kind are addressed to God, either under the name of *Cheptalil* or, more commonly, *Asista*, and not to spirits. At meetings or beer parties the common form of prayer is for one of the oldest men present to ask blessings on the company, on others specially mentioned or on the people as a whole. Sometimes the blessings are asked in the name of God and sometimes without actual mention of his name. Varying his voice in a curious way, the elder chants the words while all those present chant the responses. As he nears the end of the *Kaberuret*, the elder chants more rapidly and with increasing voice, till the final chorus of response ends with a crash of sound with very impressive and solemn effect. Although the blessings are stereotyped within limits, every elder may improvise as the occasion and his feelings dictate. Several may rise in turn and ask blessings and sometimes young men, but never very young men, may follow an elder. No woman chants a *kaberuret*, even at ceremonies for women only, but an old man is called in to do so.

In prayers and blessings, *Cheptalil* and *Asista* are used with some curious praise or reverence attributes. Their meaning has generally been lost and an enquiry as to their origin is met with the reply: *Kechae* or *Keteche*, 'one praises, or reverences.' For example: *Kongoe, Cheptalil chebo Kipkoyo*. 'Thank you, Cheptalil of the halo.' (*Kongoe*, the common word for thank you is also used for 'Thank God.' *Kipkoyo* has been translated as 'halo', because *koyen* means, with reference to the sun, to be surrounded by a halo; *koyet* means 'battle' and the two words are probably closely connected, as a halo round the sun was an important omen in war. If the halo gradually opened towards home it was an omen of victory; if it opened away from home, it was a bad omen and war would not be made.) Other phrases with obscure or lost meanings are: *Asista chebo kelya sogol*, 'God of the nine legs'; and *Asista chebo Namuni*. The normal form of address is simply *Asiswe*, 'O God', or in private prayer *Asista nenyon*, 'my God'. In this case the singular form is used for God and the possessive pronoun, whereas in the archaic phrases used in other prayers, God is referred to in the plural, despite the use of the singular form *Asista*. The plural *Asiswek* is never employed in the sense of Gods.

Kapkorosit, the great annual festival for the public worship of *Cheptalil*, was held annually in any month but August—a month which is avoided for beginning new enterprises. Several *kokwotinwek* joined together for the ceremony and a large concourse of people gathered for the occasion. The ceremony has not been held this century and the old organisation has been largely forgotten.

The *kapkorosit* was erected on an open uncultivated piece of ground well removed from any habitations. It consisted of poles about twelve feet high tied together with forest creepers; both the poles and the creepers were from species called sacred plants (*korosek*). Some plants, such as the sweet smelling *segechuwet*, are considered sacred by all clans, while others were held sacred by different clans. Leaves were left on the branches and Kikuyu grass (*seretiot*), which is sacred to all clans, was planted round the base of the structure. Very early in the morning

the people, men, women and children gathered at the *kapkorosit*, with the fruit of the Sodom apple (symbolic of cattle) in their hands. The fruit were spread thickly on the ground and set in a circle of cow dung several feet wide round the *kapkorosit*. A small space was kept clear on which a basin of plastered cow dung was made. The whole evidently constituted an altar, similar to that to be found at every married man's house. A white he-goat, adorned with many garlands of the sacred *senendet* plant and with sashes of cowrie shells (*semonok*), was led by the officiating elder round the *kapkorosit*. The people followed and the *kapkorosit* was probably marched round four times. Milk from a cow with its first calf was poured into the basin at the foot of the *kapkorosit*, and water from a spring was then poured in. Prayers were offered and blessings asked on everything: the old, the young, men and women, cattle, grass and earth; all the praise names of God were used. The people were then sprayed with *sugutek*, water containing precipitated yellow iron oxide, a liquid much prized for its beneficial effect on cattle.

The festival was not held to celebrate a season, such as sowing or harvest, since it could be held in any month except August.

The reservation regarding August probably indicated that the ceremony was inaugurating something new, since this was the month in which new ventures must not be undertaken. Further, the milk had to be from a cow with its first calf, and the water must be from a spring, new pure water. The whiteness of the he-goat (or ox as it was sometimes) indicates purity and newness. There was no blood sacrifice and the goat or ox was not killed.

Although there is little formal public worship of God among the Kipsigis, the belief in God appears in most of the ceremonies which take place at every stage of their lives. Most of these ceremonies are directly or indirectly connected with the belief in the reality and continuity of the human spirit, a belief which runs like a thread throughout their lives. The Kipsigis believe that every human spirit has existed from far back in the past, that it is continually reincarnated in the bodies of human descendants, and that it will continue so to be reincarnated so long as the family persists. Hence the extreme importance of marriage, of carrying on the line of descent and of all that pertains to the continuity of the family. Closely linked with this is the preservation and increase of property, which is entailed in the family. So strongly held is the belief in the human spirit that to the Kipsigis it is the same as knowledge. Often when they speak of a spirit it is impossible to tell whether they speak of a person who is living or dead, for those who can communicate with spirits speak of them just as they would if the spirits were living persons. Spirits are spoken to by name as if they were alive, and when they are spoken about their conversation is retailed to others in the same way as if they were living persons known to the listeners. In fact, the Kipsigis regard the spirit as much more important than the body, which they look upon as a temporary dwelling place of the spirit. This is illustrated in every day speech: the form of words commonly used when enquiring after a person's health is *Kagosop*

porto? ('Is your body better?'), or, when there is much sickness, *Yach Porwek* ('the bodies are bad'); *Amin ne?* ('What is the matter with you?'), to which the reply would be: *Amin metit* ('the head hurts me') or *Amin porto* ('the body hurts me'). When a man apologises for being sick, he is told that it is not him but his body that is troublesome.

The Kipsigis do not live in a perpetual state of fear on account of spirits, as they have no conception of evil spirits or devils. They do not believe that inanimate objects, such as trees or rocks, are the haunts of spirits, or that spirits live in the bodies of animals. The only qualification to this is the case of the hyena (p. 24). As the spirit (*oindet*) is simply a human being without a body, they cannot conceive of any change in the character of the spirit merely because it is not housed in a human body. A spirit retains the same nature it had when it was embodied and retains its interest in the welfare of the individual, family, clan or tribe. On the whole, therefore, the spirits of the dead must be benign. They may be angry, usually not without cause, and may bring sickness or trouble upon some member of a family, or upon someone who is ill-treating a member of the family. But this is done to call attention to misbehaviour and is not caused through the inherent malevolence of the spirits. It is on these occasions that the help of the *Chebsageyot* (one who communicates with the spirits) is sought, so that she can obtain direct information from the spirits as to the cause of the trouble and its remedy (see p. 120).

The desire for immortality is a potent one among the Kipsigis, who relate that a great sacrifice, on the part of the mothers of the tribe, was needed before this boon was granted:

"Originally the human race was very long-lived, for when one was getting old one's skin was shed, like a snake's, and one became young again. When death eventually came it was permanent, the body was buried in the dung heap or thrown to the hyenas and that was the end, so that the children of men were born without spirits just like cattle or animals. So the old people said: 'Why do we die forever and not return again? The moon dies but is born again; the sun dies but is born again. Why should man be lost eternally? Let us go and beg for death at the river in Pore at the foot of the precipice, so that our children may have spirits which will live forever.' So the old women ground flour and at dawn everyone took a small basketful and walked slowly singing to the edge of the precipice. Standing with their backs to the gulf and facing the rising sun, with the baskets of flour on their shoulders, they cried: 'The moon dies but returns again; man dies forever.' Casting their baskets over their shoulders, they fell with them backwards and cried *Syel!* So that now no spirit dies but returns and lives in the children again and again for ever."

It is difficult to locate the site of this tribal myth, but it has been suggested it might have taken place at Thomson's Falls, which is near a district known in the old days to the Kipsigis as Pore.

Though the Kipsigis imagine no such thing as hell, the following common phrases may possibly indicate some linguistic vestige of the idea. When cursing someone, they say: *Iwe rong* ('May you go to the

pit.'); *Kakworong* ('it is lost for ever—it has gone to the pit'); *Chebo koba irong*, pronounced *kobairong*, ('damned', literally, 'which belong who have gone to the pit'). *Keringet* is the normal modern word for pit, *irong* is used only in swearing and does not seem to mean an ordinary pit or hole.

The *piret ap peek* ceremony, which is performed before the war dance, is probably in remembrance of the sacrifice made by the old women to obtain immortality for the spirits of all Kipsigis. The war dance used to be performed in the dry season and was a source of great joy to the performers and to the children of both sexes, who not only watched the warriors but also had their own singing circles. Before the dance, all the men and a number of children used to gather on the east side of the river chosen for the occasion. About a hundred yards from the river, the participants stripped off their war dance clothes (ostrich feather head-dresses, colobus monkey skins, etc.) and all their ornaments, except necklet and anklets. These were arranged on the ground in a row. Before entering the water, every man picked a bunch of leaves and grasses and laid it on the grassy bank. After sluicing water over themselves in the river, they climbed out and formed a line on the bank of the river with their backs to the water and their faces towards the east. They clutched the bunch of leaves and grasses in their hands and, at the word of command from the *kiptayat*, they closed their eyes, crouched down and threw the bunches over their shoulders with both hands into the river. They then started forward up the hill towards the east and their clothes; on no account might anyone look back and, in climbing the hill, they opened their eyes and did not hurry, for it was essential that nobody should fall. When the clothes had been safely reached, every man picked a spray of Kikuyu grass (*seretiot*) and tied it on the shoulder of his cloak. The correspondence between the incidents in this ceremony and that of the legend of the old women's self-sacrifice seems too close to be accidental: the gulf, the river bank, the throwing of baskets and bunches over the shoulder into the river below, and the extended row of people with their backs to the gulf and their faces to the east. In the *piret ap peek* ceremony, the initial purification and then the care not to look back or stumble seem to signify that the warriors need not now fall into the gulf but may go forward safely. As the men are naked for the major part of this ceremony, women are not allowed to be present.

The Kipsigis belief in the continual reincarnation of the spirit is shown very clearly in the naming of children (p. 45).

The hyena is the only animal or thing which is associated in the Kipsigis mind with the human spirit. This association, which is probably the result of the hyena's function of eating the bodies of the dead, is described in many of the old tribal legends. It is difficult to gauge whether these tales are believed; whenever they are told, somebody will say: "I wonder if it did happen long ago?" or "The people in the old days must have been very gullible", thus indicating a tentative half belief. Despite these comments, the tales have the authority of age and form an integral part of the Kipsigis tradition.

The east plays a very important part in all Kipsigis ceremonies associated with God and the spirit world, and also in the rites connected with birth, marriage, death and even in such minor day to day matters as the slaughter of an animal for food. It affects the building of every house and regulates the positions which certain persons may occupy in it (see p. 84). In the smooth cleared space surrounding every house is the *mabwaita*, or altar, a replica of the structure erected for the *kapkorosit* ceremony. It is built of branches and creepers from the sacred plants of the clan, and is usually surmounted by a small tuft of seretiot grass. The altar must be placed on the east of the house door. In many ceremonies, the participants sit in a curve to the west so that they face the altar and the east. Sometimes a procession marches four times round the *mabwaita*, and on other occasions, when the ceremony has taken place elsewhere, sacred plants are brought home from the ceremony and burnt at the foot of the altar. The fire at the *mabwaita* is always on the eastern side of it. Even when a ceremony takes place inside a house, or at night, certain of the principal participants must face the east. It is always the east regardless of where the sun may be. When an animal is killed for food or sacrifice, it is usually slaughtered near the *mabwaita* and the head of the animal must face towards the east. If the slaughtering is done inside the house, as is the case when sheep or goats are killed at night, sometimes the head must be towards the eastern side of the house (*njor*). There is, in fact, scarcely any ceremony or rite, however minor, in which the east or the *mabwaita* (and generally both) does not play a significant part.

There are two little known and imperfect legends referring to the creation of the world and the flood. In the former it is said that 'Above' and 'Below' were not separated. A man heated a rock in a great fire and threw it into a cave, so that the world exploded. It shook for two days and afterwards became firm when it had divided into earth and sky. The tale of a great flood is recorded as *Robta nebo Kululu*, the Rain of the *Kululu*. (*Kululu* is an exceptional word, which is used in no other context and is said to mean a deep precipitous valley into which the sun cannot reach.) The rain continued for three days, until the earth was covered with water. On the fourth day, it stopped, the water subsided but the earth was left stinking.

The natural phenomenon of lightning (*ilet*) is little understood and many people connect it with rain rather than with thunder. In ordinary speech the Kipsigis say: *Tulle robta*, 'it thunders', literally, 'the rain rumbles' and *Iliele emet*, 'it lightens', literally, 'the world flashes'. The Kipsigis have no notion that *ilet* is a god, but most of them liken it to a huge bird with outspread wings.

"A hunter was once wandering on the Tindiret range between Nandi and Kipsigis country, when he saw what he thought was a python. He shot at it with a poisoned arrow, but instead of dying it flew away and burst over the hills and fell in the Mtete Valley on the other side. The Nandi came running to the place and said: 'Who killed this animal? It is the lightning.' "

Some narrators embellish the story by adding that the district stank

for days afterwards. It is not only considered lucky if lightning almost strikes a house but just misses, but also that the owner will shortly become very rich. If a man (or domestic stock) is killed by lightning, a day is set apart on which no work may be done over a wide area of the neighbourhood. This is merely an extension of the ordinary prohibition (*kiret*) on all work in a *kokwet* when a man dies.

The *Chemosit* is a legendary animal which has been described variously as a hyena (*Ketet*) and cheetah (*Kerit*). It is not a man or a spirit and there is nothing human about it, except that it stands upright and tall. It does not exist now and its name is only used to frighten children. When in the neighbourhood of the animal, its name might not be mentioned, but *Kononet* was used instead, just as when dangerously near elephants they must be called *Kiptechit* and not by their common name of *Peliot* or *Ongenyot*.

Sogornotet is strictly speaking applied to animals which behave in a way unnatural to their kind. An animal acting in this way is said to *sogorge* and is put to death at once; members of the clan of the owner may not eat the meat. Examples of *sogornotet* in animals are: attempting to drink blood when an animal has been bled; biting their young; licking bones which have been left lying about; licking faces; attempting to suck from the breasts of a woman (which is possible when women are sitting in a house with the sheep and goats); shooting out and waggling the tongue (in the manner of a snake); twisting the tail round a small tree or branch; and splitting the hump. Though the birth of twins to livestock is not called *sogornotet*, it necessitates killing the ewe if it is its first lambing. In the case of cows, the same procedure is followed as for human beings (see p. 29); in the case of goats it is of no importance at all. A domestic animal which gives birth to deformed offspring is killed, but is not called *sogornotet*.

Although it is in the nature of slang when so used, *sogornotet* may be applied to human beings guilty of any unnatural, horrible behaviour, such as incest. Repeated theft within the tribe is of the same nature and is awarded the same penalty as animal *sogornotet*, death. The word may, in fact, be applied to anyone who deliberately and repeatedly breaks the customs of the tribe. The word *Kipsagarindet* is from the same root and has a similar pejorative connotation (see p. 9). It is contrasted with the word for an adopted member of the tribe, as a person so adopted is respected, whereas *Kipsagarindet* has a disparaging, almost insulting allusion to one who has forsaken his people.

Mumek is the name applied to the various rites connected with taking the most strict and irrevocable oath. It is held in great fear and is spoken of with reluctance and even disgust, for the word really means 'to do something impossibly disgusting.' It is derived from the transitive verb *mumech*, 'to turn upside down', which has the intransitive form, *mumekse*, 'to turn oneself upside down.' If a man is strongly suspected of some serious crime, such as witchcraft or theft, but there is insufficient evidence to prove the case, he may be given the opportunity to take the oath, *yai mumek*, to assert his innocence. When the suspect has taken the oath, no man may accuse him again, or even express any

suspicion of his innocence; to do so would transfer the *mumek* from the accused to the accuser. A man who takes the *mumek* oath falsely is subject to the most terrible curse, which affects his whole family and clan, so that his wife, children, relations and livestock may sicken and die. Belief in this is absolute and there is no lack of instances of the awful consequences which have followed when the oath has been taken falsely. When the consequences of false swearing become too severe, the people relent as it is not considered good that the miscreant's whole clan should be wiped out. Ceremonial beer is prepared and a rite, similar to that undertaken for divorce (see p. 79), is carried out. The chief item in this rite is the 'anointing of one another' *Keiilege*.

Several different forms of *mumek* are used, according to the kind of case for which the oath is required to be taken. The curse attaching to false swearing varies in severity according to the seriousness of the crime. The simpler forms of *mumek*, used to obtain evidence in all cases except witchcraft, are *Mumek ap Ngotwek* and *Mumek ap Liteito*. In the former, members of the *kokwet* in which the offence occurred collect at a suitable open space, together with the accused, their relatives, witnesses and any others interested in the case. Two spears are stuck upright in the ground about three feet apart; sometimes they are crossed and tied with a certain poisonous creeper. The people seat themselves in two lines so that a clear road is left leading up to the spears. A group of middle-aged men of strong character take up their position near the spears. The man making a statement under oath divests himself of all his clothing and ornaments and is given a newly peeled wand of *kurbanyat* wood. When he approaches the spears with this in his hand, the principal speakers question him. He makes his statement and then one of the speakers warns him of the consequences of speaking falsely. He is reminded that the purpose of spears is to bring death and told that, if he is speaking falsely, he must not strike the spears with his wand but, if he is speaking the truth, he should strike the spears with the wand and be unafraid. As the accused draws nearer to the spears and seems ready to touch them, one of the speakers warns him threateningly: 'Think well before you touch the spears. Finally, by intimidation and exhortation, the accused or witness is brought to such a state that he dare not swear falsely. Sometimes men walk up confidently to strike the spears, but give way and drop the wand owing to the extraordinary manner in which the speakers are able to convince the guilty man of the certainty of the retributive curse.

Liteito is a whetstone and this is used in the second common form of *mumek*, although other stones may be used. The symbolic act accompanying the verbal oath in this case is the striking of the stone with a peeled *kurbanyat* wand. When peace was made with the Masai or Kisii, the *mumek* oath was taken by both sides. The binding rite was the killing of a dog, which was then cut in half. (The dog is associated in the Kipsigis mind with something horrible.) In cases of witchcraft (*panisiet*), the oath was enforced by what are considered by the Kipsigis to be even more horrible rites, which had to be performed in the bush far from any house. The accused had either to drink from a human skul

or to quench a fire made in a special manner by micturating on it. The fire was made in a hole by firesticks (*piunet*), which are only used on special occasions (see p. 88). *Mumek* is akin to *sogornotet* in that both have the idea of something unnatural or horrible, which brings a curse upon the perpetrator.

Uncleanness (*ngwanindo*) is a state which prevents a person from associating with his fellows. It is derived from the adjective *ngwan*, which has many meanings according to the noun it qualifies, e.g. a strong sun, a poisonous plant, an unpleasantly strong food, a smart retort, an 'unclean' person in the sense described below. It is also used to indicate certain actions, which are breaches of the law but which, although they might subject the perpetrator to the sanction of the curse, if serious, or merely to bad luck, if minor, do not render him 'unclean'. *Ngwanindo* occurs in only five instances: *rumisiet*, the killing of a Kipsigis; the removal of a corpse; the repeated birth of twins; giving birth before initiation; and certain conditions relating to birth. The degree of uncleanness varies: in the first case it is permanent and very severe; in the second it is very severe but removable after four days; in the third, it is not severe and is removable; in the fourth it is very severe and, in some circumstances, irremovable; and in the fifth case it is severe for a short period and is then removable.

A *rumindet*, that is a Kipsigis who has killed a fellow tribesman by shedding his blood, is almost permanently unclean. For the first four days after the death, the uncleanness is the most severe known. A *rumindet* may enter no house not even his own; he must live apart in the bush but must not walk about, as he may not tread on the grass; he may speak to nobody except another *rumindet;* he may drink no milk, or eat meat or cultivated vegetables, only wild ones; he may use no household utensils but only broken pieces of pots. As no one may cook for him or feed him except another *rumindet*, his relations seek out a *rumindet* to take him food and look after him. On the fourth day, his condition is alleviated to some extent after a sheep or goat has been sacrificed; this rite is similar to that of the *Artet ap Kolet* carried out after killing an enemy (see p. 114). His head is partially shaved with the aid of the blood of the sacrifice instead of with water. After this he may speak to his children and enter his house, but the prohibitions with regard to food remain. A rich man possessed of many cows may have one of them set apart for his use, as he may not drink milk from the same cows as other people, but the cow given up to his use may never again be milked for other people. He remains a conspicuous outcast with his bloody half-shaven head; he may not approach a vegetable garden or dung heap; he speaks in a low voice. In time he becomes more normal, but the uncleanness can only be completely removed by his killing four enemy warriors and one enemy woman in war. As the killing of women was not a Kipsigis custom, in this exceptional case a very old woman was killed 'for in any case she would not live long.'

Besides this uncleanness, there is curious custom which occurs only in cases of *rumisiet*. It is called *Ikiet* or *Ipchet* and seems to be a form of curse rather than of uncleanness. It only occurs when a *rumindet*

meets any member of the clan of the man he has killed. The *rumindet* himself has not *ipchet*, neither has the member of the other clan; it only occurs as a result of the meeting of the two; in fact *Kepche* from which *Ipchet* is derived means 'one shares it'. Although the sheep sacrifice on the fourth day makes it possible for the *rumindet* to meet members of the wronged clan, it is still necessary, to avoid *ipchet*, for both parties to pluck a handful of grass, spit on it and then exchange handfuls. If later on such encounters take place at a beer party, beer tubes are exchanged between the two; this is considered to remove any anger or ill-feeling subsisting between the two parties.

The uncleanness of a man who removes a corpse from the house is less severe than that of *rumisiet*. Immediately after the removal of the body, the unclean person washes thoroughly in the river and then returns to the house of the deceased, for he may enter no other dwelling. His hair is slashed about anyhow giving it the most repulsive appearance. He may visit no one, but his friends may come and visit him as he sits outside the house disconsolate, with his sorrow for the loss of parent or relative aggravated by his isolation. No one may approach near to him and he may speak only to his relatives—and then only in a whisper. If he wishes to converse with other friends he does so through the medium of one of his clan. Food is brought to him by a relative on a potsherd. He may not touch his food with his hands, but conveys it to his mouth with a piece of stick plucked from the bush; he may not use a metal knife nor the *segetiet*, a wooden knife used for cutting *kimiet*. Even tobacco must be put in his mouth, as he must not touch it with his hands. On the fourth day a sheep is sacrificed, he goes to the river to bathe and he anoints himself with fat from the sheep's tail and with butter. After his head has been shaved clean, he may enter his house and perhaps those of his relations. If he is a strict man he will not enter houses or associate with people freely, until he has taken a strong aperient. Not until eight to ten days from the date of the death is he considered to be quite normal again.

The uncleanness caused by the birth of twins (*Simotunik*) is less serious and is removable immediately by the sacrifice of a ram, the tail fat of which is used to anoint both the mother and the women who were present at the birth. Until this has been done, similar prohibitions are enforced as for a corpse carrier. If the sacrifice is not made, or not properly carried out, the uncleanness continues, so that the mother may not walk in the cattle and goat enclosures or in the vegetable garden. Although she is not refused food, nobody will give her milk, blood or vegetables. There seems to have been some connection between the parasitic fig tree (*Simotwet*) and the birth of twins. It is not a sacred tree or the haunt of spirits, but it is often used as a meeting place because of its size and the shade it gives. There is a prohibition on the use of this tree for firewood if any livestock of the house has twins, although animal twins are called *Saramek* and not *Simotunik*.

The uncleanness attending *puret*, that is conception before initiation, is similar to the case of twins. In addition to the ram sacrifice and anointing, some of the undigested grass from the ram's stomach (*eyat*

is scattered on the path the girl must walk on from the bush where she was confined to the house. When returning to the house, she must tread on the *eyat*, a little of which is also placed on her bed. Should the illegitimate child draw breath and cry out, the uncleanness is no longer removable and no one can marry the girl. Though this seems a harsh and superstitious rule, it was of value as a deterrent to immorality and the bearing of children by immature girls.

There is a somewhat technical form of uncleanness relating to child-bearing, which is considered by the women to be very serious and may lead to the women cursing the culprit. After the usual ram sacrifice, a mixture is made up of goat's milk, salt lick, vegetables, medicinal roots and the grass that sheep and goats are fond of eating. These are cooked together and then poured into a gourd. The woman to be purified drinks a little of this and the remainder is sprinkled over the flock gathered round the salt lick troughs. This form of uncleanness has the same kind of prohibitions as in the case of twins: an evil effect on milk, livestock and vegetables, which will not thrive in its presence. If a woman is suspected of having neglected the purification ceremony, other women will be nervous ever afterwards of giving her milk or vegetables, or having her visit their stock or garden.

Some people are affected by a condition described as *Simwek*, the plural form, only used in this connection, of *Simdo*, dirty. This condition is only recognised from experience and it is entirely removed by bathing. Failure to bathe is said to endanger the lives of sick persons and the offender is liable to have a curse pronounced against him or her. A similar condition is described which afflicts women with child. The remedy in this case is for the afflicted one to bathe. If a person in this condition unfortunately enters the house of a sick person, or approaches near to a sick person outside a house, the afflicted person must spit on the sick man or, if the sick man objects to this, a thong of hide such as is used for stringing bows is sought. The person suffering from *simwek* ties four knots in the thong for a sick man and three for a sick woman and then ties the thong round the sick person's wrist or ankle.

The evil eye (*Sulisiet*) is less common than the above affliction and that of *Simwek*. It is considered as an unfortunate attribute, for which a man is not blamed or even disliked. Steps are taken to try to prevent a person afflicted with *sulisiet* from being present at a time when his condition may cause damage. A *sulindet* has only power to damage in the morning; he cannot affect the mature or the dark coloured, but only the new, tender, immature, soft, white, pink, in fact the condition described by the adjectives *Ngarngar* and *Nyelnyel*. Especially susceptible subjects are young babies, the udders of cows and goats, new born calves or lambs, and raw wounds, such as the pierced ears of boys before they are healed; it is for this reason that pierced ears and wounds are covered with leaves rather than to keep off flies. The need for shielding the new and tender from evil influence is illustrated in the prohibition on new undertakings, initiation and so on in the year called *Karatet*, when the setiot plant is in a tender state (see p. 12). A similar case is that relating to newly castrated animals; these must

be kept away from the neighbourhood of paths, for it is thought that if a pregnant woman approached the animal the wound would become septic. Among inert substances, unbaked pottery is thought to be very susceptible to the evil eye and a potter (*Chepterenioi*) will do all she can to prevent a stranger from looking at her 'immature' wares.

Two birds presage good or evil fortune: the *Chepkosoiot*, a large white eagle with black markings, and the *Kiptiltiliet*, the woodpecker. Omens from these birds can only be predicted when a man is on a journey and when the birds are perched on a tree and not in flight. The omen is judged by the position of the bird relative to the traveller, when he first notices the bird. Six positions are named, but two, *Kadit* and *Taylel*, are in much more common use than the rest. When going to war, hunting, seeking a new place for a house, visiting a friend and so on, on the outward journey the positions and indications are: *Kadit*, left front; fortunate. *Taylel* right front: unfortunate. *Yega*: left back; fortunate. *Utumo*: right back; unfortunate. *Turio:* straight ahead; unfortunate. *Siori:* straight behind; fortunate. On the return journey, the indications of *Kadit* and *Taylel* are reversed but the rest remain the same. When the sick are visited, the omens are opposite for a sick man and a sick woman; in the case of a sick man, the omens are the same as given above for a return journey; for a woman they are the same as for an outward journey, except that, for a woman past the age of child-bearing, the indications are the same as for a man. A special form (*tartet*) of the word for 'bird' (*taritiet*) is used in connection with omens. Most Kipsigis have considerable faith in omens: the older more than the younger and the men more than the women, who profess not to understand them. They have an important psychological effect on a sick man and probably help many of them to recover. The Kipsigis tend to brood when ill and often show little will-power in fighting disease. In public matters the consideration paid to omens has been described in the Story of the Migration of the Kipsigis (see p. 4). *Kadit* and *Taylel* are the positions indicative of the strongest omens: a man will leave a district if he is continually meeting bad omens; if a bad omen is encountered when a party is on the way to make a marriage proposal, the project is usually abandoned altogether. Such major decisions are, however, only taken in connection with the *Kadit* and *Tavlel* positions.

When a domestic animal is sacrificed, or when it is slaughtered for meat, it is killed in a special way. After a sheep or goat has been thrown to the ground, the mouth and nose are held and the throat squeezed so that it is suffocated at once. In the case of an ox the legs and mouth are tied with thongs. The test of death is to touch the eye. Before beginning to skin the animal, the slaughterer usually touches both the legs and the head. The skin is slit on the underside from end to end and then parted a little at the neck, where an incision is made and the carcase drained of blood. After the skinning is completed, the stomach is opened so that the entrails may be inspected. Certain appearances are considered to be good omens, *Karur mo*, 'the stomach is ripe'. Unsatisfactory appearances are described as *Mo rur mo*, 'the stomach is not ripe', while very

inauspicious ones are said to be *Kame mo*, 'the stomach is dead'. The position and colouring of the entrails indicate whether the omens apply to the neighbourhood or to some distant district. If the animal is being killed only for food, inauspicious omens are not considered important enough to prevent the meat from being eaten, but no one will wear a *tamokiet* from the animal on finger or wrist (see p. 32). If the sacrifice is made for a sick person, *Karurmo* indicates recovery and *Kamemo*, death. For some important ceremonies, the sacrifice must be repeated until *Karurmo* is obtained: e.g. initiation, birth before initiation, *katunisiet*, the chief marriage ceremony, and *katumet*.

The *tamokiet* is a small strip of skin with the hair left on, which is usually cut from the breast or forelegs. It is generally worn by all participants in any ceremony involving the sacrifice of an animal. Men wear it on the middle finger of the right hand as a ring. A woman wears it as a bracelet on the right wrist if the ceremony is for someone of her husband's clan; if the ceremony is for a member of her father's clan, she wears it on the left wrist.

There are innumerable minor actions and incidents which indicate or bring good or bad luck. Some are local, many are trivial and all are more in the nature of country superstitions than such universally believed notions as omens from birds and auspices from entrails. If a man meets a large non-gregarious locust or grasshopper (*Talamwet*) laying eggs on a path, it may be killed unless it is facing east, when it must be covered with grass. If a man is walking on a path and finds a mushroom (*pobat*) accidentally, he must pick it and give it to the first child he meets on the road, at the house he is going to, or when he reaches home, if that is his destination. Speaking well of anything or stating that something wished for will happen, is called *Mongset*. It is the worst of bad form to praise other people's children, stock or crops, as it is thought that calamity follows praise. Most people become known to their near relatives and friends as lucky or unlucky sneezers. If it is noted that a man sneezes immediately after a project has been discussed and the project subsequently succeeds, the sneezer is said to have a good nose, *mie serut*. Particular attention was paid to this when war was being discussed and even a child who had a reputation as a bad sneezer could cause the elders to put off an expedition. If a marriage proposal is being discussed, an unlucky sneeze at a critical moment will cause the proposers to return home and to postpone the discussions for a few days. In cases of severe illness care is taken to keep known unlucky sneezers away from the patient. Fortunately lucky sneezers seem to predominate; those born between the earliest dawn and four in the afternoon tend to have a good nose; those born in the evening and night are called *Kertimion* and can never be good sneezers, but are not necessarily all bad. Sneezing plays an important part in the naming of children by advising the mother which spirit has entered into her child (see p. 45). A child whose sneezing is delayed at birth is called *Kip (Chep) koske;* this may have some linguistic connection with the hour about four in the afternoon (*Koskoliny*), as this is the hour after which bad sneezers are born. A sneeze which has no connection with a

project or the future generally is understood to mean: 'someone is speaking of me'.

The month called *Robtoe* (black rain) and corresponding to August is considered as an unlucky month, possibly because of some tribal calamity of long ago. Some ceremonies may not be carried out in August: *kapkorosit*, or religious festival; initiation may not be entered but may continue if begun before August; *katunisiet*, the main marriage ceremony, but all the other marriage ceremonies are permissible; harvest ceremonies, if the harvest happens to be as early as August; the *rotet* ceremony; and *saget ap eito*. In general, nothing new should be started and no Kipsigis would begin a new house in this month. Probably all the ceremonies mentioned above have an element of beginning something new in them: *Kapkorosit* was probably the beginning of a new year; at initiation and marriage a new state is entered; harvest is the new food supply for the year; *saget ap eito* marked the beginning of a new generation; and possibly the *rotet* ceremony (see p. 11) meant the beginning of a new war.

APPENDIX 3: Hyena Tales.
4: A Family Sacrifice and Prayer.
5: The Chemosit.

A Halo – Koyet
The flood – roptab Kululu
Mumek (mumech) – ① mumekab → Ngotwek
② mumekab → Liteito
Pianet
The piret ap peek Ceremony – remembrance of the sacrifice made by the old women who to seek immortality for the spirits of all Kipsigis.
– warriors off their clothes' war.)
– before entering water,
– Grass and leaves.
– their backs to the water
– during dry season.

Chapter VI

CHARACTERISTICS

PHYSICALLY, the Kipsigis type is somewhat mixed owing to intermarriage in the past with unknown tribes and, during the last two hundred years, with the Masai and Kisii following capture in war. The Kipsigis are distinguished by their slight build and the neatness of their rather small but well made bodies. A hundred and twenty pounds is a fair weight for a Kipsigis, a hundred and forty pounds is a big man. A man of six feet is very uncommon. Small feet, thin ankles and little calf are characteristic but the latter is not associated with a prominent heel. They have long narrow hands with supple fingers and long finger nails. The head is nearly always long and narrow with a pronounced protuberance at the back. High cheek bones are the rule. Nose, lips, chin and skin colour seem to be their most variable features. On the whole, there is a large proportion of well bridged noses, with much less tendency to broadness of nostril than in the Bantu, though when the nostrils are broad the nose often has a Semitic form. Lips vary from the thin European type to thick Negro. The chin varies from the pugnacious to the receding. The most usual skin colour is chocolate, or milk chocolate, though jet black and yellow brown occur. Their own colour preference varies between chocolate and black, yellow brown being disliked by almost all. The most outstanding characteristic is the neatness of their well proportioned bodies and the entire absence of fat. Even the very old rarely show any sign of a paunch. Any tendency to fat is a source of merriment or derision and, if excessive, even of disgust. They have little beard, though all shave.

They are not strong physically or in resistance to disease, but their endurance on the march and ability to go for long periods without food and without complaint are remarkable. Even so, they always admire the Nandi for having been able to outdo them in this respect, when they used to make war together. In the old days, the Kipsigis went on raids as far north as Laikipia and as far south as present day Tanganyika. This entailed long marches through the foodless Masai areas, when the only means of subsistence was the food they carried in their long narrow bag (*suberet*). This usually contained two or three pounds of uncooked grain, which they ate raw. An additional food was sometimes taken—*maywek*—flour gelatinised by a curious process described under beer manufacture (see p. 102); this was usually soaked in honey.

The dress and ornaments of the Kipsigis and Nandi are almost identical and have been well described and illustrated in Hollis' *The*

Nandi. The men wore a short cloak of calf skins hung over one shoulder. Later this was almost entirely displaced by two yards of cotton cloth or a blanket, worn in the same way. This was generally oiled to keep out the cold and wet and often coloured with red clay. Secondary colours were preferred to bright ones and red was particularly avoided. A close fitting cap made from an ox stomach protected the head and hair from rain. Boys wore a similar cloth to the men but when very small they wore a cloak made of a single sheep or goat skin (*koliget*).

Ornaments were an essential part of Kipsigis dress. Small tasteful pendants of copper or lead were usually worn in the lobe of the ear. Either bead or iron armlets were worn above the biceps. Bead or flat brass bracelets later became the fashion for the wrists. Above the hips a single string of blue beads was common. Frilly anklets of the fur of the colobus monkey, or occasionally of the black baboon, were worn on special occasions. A bead necklace was sometimes worn. The hair was dressed into a picturesque pigtail, which was untied at dances so that the hair flopped in time to the rhythm. Boys did not wear ornaments in the ears, on the upper arm or ankles, but only on the wrist.

Dress in the case of women was much more important and conventional. A double skirt made of six or seven softened sheep or goat skins, with the hair removed, was fastened round the waist by an invisible girdle between the two thicknesses of skin. It came well below the knee and was so arranged that it could not gape in front when the wearer stooped. The dresses for young wives, and for special occasions for the older women, were sewn with beads down the seams and at the edges, and with beaded tabs at the corners. The upper garment was either a *koliget* cloak of a single calf skin, or a long cloak made of half-a-dozen sheep or goat skins sewn together and ornamented with beads. At work this was usually removed, but was always put on in the presence of men. Leather straps, sewn with patterns of beads, were hung from the ears, and joined across the breasts by strands of fine iron chainlets. Small pendants of chainlets or beads were worn in the upper part of the ear. For dress occasions, a band of beads was worn round the head across the forehead. Five to seven necklets of wire bound with very fine wires were always worn. Over the breast two large disc spirals of brass wire were suspended by a strap round the neck and joined together by thin chains. Heavy spirals of iron or brass wire were worn occasionally on both the upper and lower arms but more often on the lower arms only. The weight of the metal is said to help the women in digging and splitting firewood. When at work, the women often discarded the ear and breast ornaments, which were replaced when visitors arrived or when visits were made. The seeds of a forest shrub made into a single string of beads were worn round the ankle.

When the hair was about an inch long the head was shaved. This applied to men, women and children. Men always kept their heads covered after their hair had been cut. The head was completely shaved and the hair was never cut into patterns. During the first five to seven months of initiation, the hair was left uncut. This custom was observed not only by the initiates but also by their near relations. A small tuft

of hair (*sugunyet*), when left over the fontanelles, indicated that a brother or sister of the child had died before it was born. In the case of small children a pendant bead ornament was attached to the tuft (see p. 55).

There seems to be some evidence that the Kipsigis eye is not sensitive to certain light waves corresponding to the pure blue of the spectrum. Although there is a considerable variety of words descriptive of colours, it is difficult not only to translate many of these, but even to know the correct one to apply to some particular object. Colour names are often derived from, or are the terms commonly used to describe, the curious colours of Kipsigis cattle; *lel* and *sirwon*, 'white' or 'new'; *tooe* (*tue*) black or dark blue; *birir*, 'red'; *sitien*, 'brownish yellow, orange'; *toleliol*, 'yellow, bright yellow'; *nyalil*, 'green and blue green to pale pure blue'; *arus*, 'grey blue'; *oomon*, 'dark brown, purple'; *murwon*, *mur*, 'medium brown'; *simbolian*, 'pale grey, or pale heliotrope'; *seroon*, applied to a man between 'red' and 'black'; *simatian*, 'speckled dark brown, brindled'. The last two were applied chiefly to cattle. Although the Kipsigis refer to the blue sky as *tooe* ('black'), they call a dyed sky blue *nyalil*, the word used for the green of grass, leaves, and some pale blue flowers. For example, the blue of a sunny sky and the blue of a cornflower appear to them as being different colours. Violets and purples, such as dyed or flower blues containing much red, are not considered as being *nyalil*. Purple is described by the same word as dark reddish brown, *oomon*. The following common flowers illustrate the difficulty in describing those colours, in which blue predominates or is present in a considerable proportion. Morning glory is *nyalil*, which is also used to describe grass and leaves; Love-in-a-Mist is *arus*, also used for the blue grey in cattle; Potato creeper is *arus* or *simbolian*, also used for greyish white or pale grey; Blue delphinium is *tooe*, also used for a black skin and charcoal; Common iris is *oomon*, *mu* or *seroon*. Purple convolvulus is *oomon*.

One of the most striking characteristics of the Kipsigis is dignity and quietness of demeanour under all circumstances. It is very bad form for any grown-up to display excessive interest in a stranger or in any unusual phenomenon. Children also show very little curiosity, but if they do it is excused as a childish attribute. If an adult gives way to excitement, anger or any display of feeling, the onlookers are embarrassed and wait for him to recover his self-control. Excuses are made for an isolated outburst: "He is not to blame, he has been ill", or "Indeed, it was very irritating". Habitual outbursts earn for a man or woman a very bad reputation and may cause the offender to be nicknamed 'the crazy one'. This reticence, almost repression, affects nearly all other emotions, such as affection, sorrow and anger. Whether it is inherent in the character of the people or developed through generations of inculcation during initiation, it seems to have serious disadvantages in some respects. Not only are the Kipsigis slow to anger but slow to action of any sort, good or bad. It is difficult to understand how they were so successful in war, and how they got together in time to repel an enemy. Examples of this slowness to action occur in every day

affairs. A man visiting a friend to ask a favour will not come to the point for a long time. If asked directly what he wants, he may even go so far as to say: *tamache ne?* ('What should I want?'). Similarly if asked or questioned, a man will reply: *Ingen ngo?*, 'Who knows?'. This reluctance is in part due to habit, part to inherent slowness of thought and part to etiquette. It would, for instance, be ill-mannered to call on someone and rush straight into the purpose of the visit. Besides being occasionally a mask for stupidity, this slowness to action is sometimes a sign of stolidity and results in the acceptance of adversity quietly and without prompting any effort towards improvement.

When friends or mother and son meet after a long parting, the words of greeting are quiet, stereotyped and deliberate. There is no rush to the meeting and no excited questioning. The elder (by generation or by marriage) first offers the hand or, in the case of older people, both hands crossed. The simple handshake is the Kipsigis custom, with variations ranging from repeated pressure to 'pump-handling' and alternate holding of the fingers and then the thumb. The usual greeting is *Ichamege* and the reply, *Kechamege*, 'we like ourselves'. After a long absence the elder person will say to the younger, *Chamege tuk*, or, in the case of a small boy, *subai*, the reply to which is *ebo*; in the case of a small girl or an adult female relation, *takwenya*, the reply to which is *igo*. (The meaning of these words is unknown to the Kipsigis; they may be from the Masai or of parallel origin to the similar Masai greetings.) Although a woman may almost faint with joy on meeting her children after a long absence, she will scarcely show any sign in public of her emotion, but will await an opportunity for a good talk with them alone.

Slowness to anger is a remarkable Kipsigis characteristic, which has been crystallised in their maxim: *Sisinge sikwasta nerekek*, 'Be silent until your anger has abated'. (The plural *nerekek* is only used in this connection and is a very exceptional case of an abstract verb-noun in the plural). If a man gives way to anger before others, they will be silent or speak very quietly to him until his wrath has subsided. Should a man be angry in a house, he is asked to go outside until he has regained his composure, then return. In this way, a man who has become noisy or quarrelsome at a beer party is removed from the house, without the need for any physical force. The dead silence of disapproval from his companions, and a quiet word or two from the house owner seem to bring home his fault, even to a man who has drunk too much. If a man persists in his anger, for which he has good cause acknowledged by all, recourse is had to the ceremonial apology, *nyoetap gat* (see p. 115). Should a man nurse his anger after this, he puts himself in the wrong. Anger is looked upon as something to be ashamed of and compassion is felt for a person who is angry. *Nereket* or *nerekindo* (anger) is commonly used in contradistinction to *paibayindo* (happiness). The existence of the ceremonial apology indicates that the Kipsigis view the removal of anger as an urgent necessity, as if it were a disease. It is, however, realised that action taken on the spur of the moment, although wrong, may be excusable. An adulterer or thief might be killed in hot blood, if caught in the act, but not afterwards. In cases of homicide a cow

(*iringotit*) is taken at once to the injured clan to prevent reprisals, so that the case may be properly tried in council and no further life be lost (see p. 113).

It is considered the worst of bad form to show affection before other adults. A man holding his wife's hand would drop it if someone appeared a hundred yards away. Despite this lack of show, the Kipsigis are affectionate in their personal relationships. Cases have occurred where men have committed suicide after the death of their wives, presumably because 'their sorrow would not leave them'. Occasionally an oldish widower will wander aimlessly about the district asking, in a half idiotic fashion, where his two dead children are. Sometimes a man will mope around the house where his wife or son has died and then leave and go elsewhere. Despite all efforts to hide it, affection is sometimes shown when a loved one is dying, and the quiet undemonstrative attentions showered on the sick are a commonplace of family life. Tactful feeling has established the convention that when a widow's son dies, it is unforgivable to call the widow *kobo* (mother of), followed by the child's name. If a parent is sick or alone, a son or daughter will have him or her to stay; this is considered as natural recompense to the parents for the affection showed to their children when they were young. It is the duty of children, whether grown up or not, to visit their relatives. Generally a present is taken such as a piece of clothing, food, an ornament or a pot; it is always the younger person who makes the present. It is also the duty of every child, however many there may be in the family, to visit a sick parent, brother or sister.

There is a proverb about the wild banana plant (*sasuriet*), which typifies the Kipsigis attitude towards gratitude: *Mokeyume sondii, e moen ketil*, 'One does not shelter under a leafy canopy and then when it stops raining cut it down.' Because of this saying no Kipsigis will dig up or destroy a sasuriet plant, as this would be symbolic of ingratitude, *ngogisto*. There are, of course, the mean, the selfish and the callous, but these are the despised and disliked minority. Everyone encounters and suffers from stupidity, but the Kipsigis recognise this failing for what it is and realise that all people are stupid on occasions. 'Thank you' is expressed by the word *Kongoe*, which is continually on their lips. It is not, however, automatic and consequently when used it expresses real thanks. It is also used when thanking God: *Kongoe Asista*, or even *Kongoe* alone, as when relief is expressed at the recovery of a sick person. There is no specific word for 'Please', but the idea is expressed either by a suffix to the verb or by a particle, *-so* and *ibak*. A wife when asking her husband to come would not use the abrupt *nyoon*, 'come', but *nyoon ibak*. Sometimes this form expresses emphasis, 'do please come'. The suffix *-so* (often contracted to *-s*) has a wider application. It softens the harshness of any word, converts a command to a request and makes conversation kindly or respectful. *Konu*, literally 'give it here', is used only of things to which the speaker is entitled, and its crudeness is usually softened by the addition of *-s* or *-so*. When a man asks for something to which he has no claim, it would be rude to use this word at all. *Nagan* is 'give me' applied to milk or tobacco; *sorokwon*, applied

to vegetables and *mogutwan*, applied only to grain. *Putwon* is used in connection with food, meat and almost anything and has the polite connotation of 'give me a little'. All these words are more acceptable than the harsh *konu*, or *konon*. Another method of softening instructions, especially to small children but also among adults of different seniority, is a long drawn out *ee* sound interspersed between commands: *Labat ka ee; ok imwojin konyoo ee*, 'run home and tell him to come'. The *ee* is spoken on a deep note with a very attractive intonation.

There is hardly a worse epithet to apply to a person than *ngok*, 'selfish' or 'stingy'. (*Ngokto* means dog). *Ngoknotet*, 'meanness, selfishness', is the normal noun form derived from the adjective, but *ngokisto* means ingratitude, especially in the sense of ill-behaviour towards someone from whom kind treatment or benefits have been received. Other kindred words are: *ngetgong*, the kind of selfishness shown by one who does not willingly help others. *Kimn* (*Chemn*) *getgongyan*, one who does not help; the verb, *saigong*, 'be unselfish', and the noun from it, *sagetapgong*, 'unselfishness'. These are in very common use, especially with regard to food, for it is a widespread trait, even among children, to pretend to be satisfied, in order that there may be sufficient left for others. *Rotin* means one who does not feed his family properly and is a word not to be said to a man's face, except in fun. *Emosto* is the word which shows the presence of affection more than any other. It has a connotation of homesickness, but it is rather a longing for the affection of friends and relations than for home itself. Its probable derivation is from *emet*, 'country', but the connection between the two words is not apparent to the Kipsigis. *Nyegem* means to ask a man to do something which he feels unable or unwilling to do, yet cannot decently refuse. This is a thing to be avoided.

A people whose habit was war and who fought successfully against the then powerful Masai, carried their arms far into enemy territory, and ousted them from a considerable stretch of country, must have possessed physical bravery to no small degree. Even today it is to be seen in the hunting of wild animals, such as the leopard and lion, and in many smaller ways.

A Kipsigis regards hospitality as supremely important and would rather be accused of almost anything than inhospitality. This is stressed particularly in the parental admonition to the bride at the marriage ceremony. It is almost unheard of for a Kipsigis to allow a person to pass a house in the evening without asking him to supper. Any stranger from another district must be fed and housed and, if there is beer in the neighbourhood, he is sure to be invited to it. Children are in the habit of visiting neighbouring houses in the evening and are always offered food; frequently they refuse, or take a trifle out of politeness. It must be remembered there is only a definite amount of flour ground for the family for the needs of the day. Although every visitor fed means less food for the family, it is never grudged and the visitor is always fed first. When a friend arrives food is shared with him, even if this means that the family have short commons. The acceptance of hospitality, help or gifts from friends or relations entails some kindness

in return. The acceptance of a gift, especially a large one such as an ox or sheep, from persons other than relatives or intimate friends, means that the giver may, at some future time, ask for something, which the acceptor of the gift can hardly refuse. Hospitality regarding sleeping accommodation is restricted by certain prohibitions: a man may not sleep in the house of a member of the previous or subsequent age set to his own; he may not sleep in the house of his wife's relations, or any relation by marriage, or adult relations of the opposite sex, such as mother, aunt, sister. In the latter case, the occupants may leave the house to the stranger and go elsewhere.

Helpfulness to blood relations, to relations by marriage and neighbours in the *kokwet* is a fundamental rule of Kipsigis social life. Women help one another in all forms of domestic work: cleaning the house, grinding corn, making beer, sewing clothes and ornaments, picking vegetables, carrying water and wood, especially if there is sickness or a rush of work. Groups of friends band together as a routine to perform these duties, and lend children to herd goats or look after the younger children. There is no obligation to perform these tasks, except for relations. It is, however, the custom and there is no special word for working without remuneration. Those who help their friends in field work are often given a basket of grain at harvest, but many refuse this. The collection of honey gives a special instance of the refusal of such a reward. Although in some districts almost every man has beehives, only a few are expert at taking the honey. These specialists seem to be much less affected by stings than other people, and they will always take the honey from the hives of those unable to do it for themselves. Although the operation is painful and difficult, the honey takers will not accept a portion of the honey as a reward. On the other hand, the Kipsigis seem slow to adapt the traditional forms of helpfulness to new circumstances so that, when a new problem arises, every man acts only for himself. They are constitutionally loathe to interfere in any way, helpfully or otherwise, in another man's business. A man will not instruct others and concerted consideration or action to meet a new problem is delayed.

Slavery was unknown to the Kipsigis. The nearest approach to it was a prisoner of war who was bound to work for his captors till ransomed or adopted. The verb *oot* means literally 'working without a reward', but it has acquired an unpleasant sound to Kipsigis ears, as it has a suggestion of working unwillingly or of being compelled to work for someone; similarly, *Ootwagindet*, means a person who is almost a slave.

In war there seems to have been little cruelty or mutilation. To wild animals, the Kipsigis are cruel in a thoughtless way by not putting them out of their misery quickly. This is different from their attitude towards domestic animals, since it is not uncommon to hear it said that a sick cow or sheep should be put out of its pain. Torture was used only in cases of suspected witchcraft. To obtain a confession a thin thong of hide is tied round the suspect's head and the ends fastened to two springy poles fixed firmly in the ground. The man is thus suspended

by the head and the thongs are beaten, while tree ants are scattered on his body. There are occasionally bad cases of cruelty to wives, but with children the Kipsigis err on the side of leniency. Generally speaking, the Kipsigis are surprisingly free from cruelty or vindictiveness considering their environment and their long preoccupation with war.

The Kipsigis and allied tribes had a well-deserved reputation among neighbouring tribes as cattle thieves. Taking cattle from enemy tribes in wars and raids was the life of the Kipsigis and, of course, was not considered to be theft. Two different words stress the distinction in the Kipsigis mind between theft, *chor*, and the legitimate aggressive action resulting in the taking of cattle, *paru*. *Mokechor toogap pik* ('One does not steal cattle from people, i.e. Kipsigis'). *Kebaru toogap punik* ('One raids cattle from enemies'). In the old days no house was locked or even shut; it was assumed that nothing would be taken. That theft was regarded not so much as a crime, but as something unnatural is indicated by the punishment meted out to a thief. For the first offence, a reprimand was given to the thief and a complaint made to his clan; for a repetition of the offence, a beating might be administered to the thief and very serious representations made to his clan; after a third offence, he would be disowned by his clan and sentenced to public execution. Such an habitual thief is said to be a *sogoranet*, that is one who does something so unnatural that death is the inevitable punishment. The Kipsigis method of government and mode of life made honesty a social necessity. Natural products of the country are common property, until a man does some work on them when they become the property of the individual. After a man has cut poles or thatching grass for his house, he might have to leave them some time a long way from home before he could transport them. No one would dream of taking them; even a bundle of firewood left for weeks would not be touched. Beehives are seldom set up near houses but they are never stolen or robbed. In cases of genuine hunger, the theft of a sheep was tolerated if the *nyoetap gat*, or formal apology, was carried out soon afterwards. The taker of the sheep would usually make reparations when he was able to do so.

Direct lying is very uncommon among men and the Kipsigis generally make very poor liars. When it does occur it is usually the result of fear of some sort: fear of the curse, or fear of giving offence among themselves. Untruthfulness is not so rare among women. Prevarication and silence are the more common ways of concealing the truth. For a man to betray another Kipsigis is difficult, even when he cannot approve the action taken; to betray a member of his family or clan is impossible.

An annoying trait, which they themselves find irritating, is the custom of asking, and asking continually, for trifles. They are always begging tobacco from one another to chew or to use as snuff. Although the general rule is that a man may ask for tobacco but nothing else, this rule is continually being broken. They all beg vegetables from one another's gardens, but this is tolerated good humouredly. Some districts are so notorious for begging that, anyone proposing to visit such a district will wear his worst clothes and few ornaments, in order to

mitigate the nuisance.

Utter incapability of organising anything quickly or efficiently is the characteristic most likely to prejudice the future of the Kipsigis as a tribe. Though this failing is apparent in every ceremony, in play and in activities of all kinds, they do not realise it themselves and it results in a great deal of useless work and wasted effort.

The most endearing trait of the Kipsigis is probably their sense of humour, which makes them delightful companions on a journey or in any difficult or annoying conditions. Not only do they sense that the unfortunate is often inherently ridiculous, but they also have a real appreciation of the amusing in any situation, whether the laugh is against them or not and no matter how tired or worried they may be.

Proper conduct towards others is of great consequence and stands high in the tribal scale of values. *Talosiet* means general nice behaviour and kindness and to call a person *talaa* is to give him a good character. The basis of good behaviour is the strict rules regarding *tegisto*, the respect to be shown to those to whom it is strictly due. Foremost, respect is owing to father and mother; uncles and aunts are included under these terms, especially the father's brother. Similarly respect is owing to 'Godfathers' and 'Godmothers', or those who hold that position from functions they perform at initiation. All elders must be accorded respect by persons junior to them; the older a person the more respect he is entitled to expect. Respect is always shown to the previous age set because, as the possible father of girls marriageable by the next generation of men, they come into the category of *sanik*. Even between persons of the same age, special respect is always shown to *konyitenik*, or *sanik*, that is all relations by marriage: relations of a wife, a sister's husband and those of a son's wife or a daughter's husband. Finally, respect is customary between the sexes when adult. To stand up is not a sign of respect: a child or a woman will remain seated when the most venerable old man arrives, but a young person sitting on a stool will give it to an older person. The younger in generation should not offer to greet or shake hands with an older person. As a young wife takes the age set of her husband and is treated with the same respect as he is accorded, she may greet people older than herself if her husband is senior to them. An attractive form of true politeness strictly practised by all adults is shown when a man approaches a house or draws near persons speaking together; he makes sufficient noise by coughing or other means to acquaint them of his approach.

Great care is taken when speaking before adults of the opposite sex. When reference has to be made to intimate or unpleasant topics, special words have to be used. This is particularly so if the listener is senior or related in any way to the speaker. The common or vulgar word may be used between two men of the same age set in the presence of their wives, but the better behaved people avoid this. The following examples show the words which are not permissible followed by the corresponding polite words in brackets. *Unge*, 'wash oneself' (*puyge*, 'brush or clean oneself'; *un eut*, 'wash the hands'.) *Kaiuwai*, 'suffer from diarrhoea' (*nyirirto moet*, 'the stomach frowns'; *jute moet*, 'the stomach pulls')

(for cattle: *purugetoni*). *Aejet*, 'lover' and *tiliet*, 'sweetheart'; (*careet*, 'friend'). *Korgot*, plural *korusiek*, means 'female' and must never be used to a woman except as an opprobrious epithet. (In Nandi, this is not so and *korgot* may be used to a man's mother.) In Kipsigis the correct terms in order of respect are *chebioset* (*chebiosok*), *Koptapgor*, *Kwando* (*kwanyik*), *Kobogoriot* (*Kobogorisiek*).

A man must not make love to, or even be near, a girl or his wife in the presence of those to whom he owes respect. It is strictly important that a man covers his person decently in the presence of all married women. If a man is working without his clothes and he hears the noise of a woman's dress in the distance, he will run for his garment. Married women are equally careful on this score as also on that of the exact length of their skirts. A woman should walk behind her husband on a path. A man meeting a woman on a path takes the right hand in passing. In the old days a woman might be molested or stopped on the road by a man, unless she was carrying a milk gourd.

APPENDIX 6: Kipsigis Tales Illustrating Character.

CHAPTER VII

BIRTH

IN the following chapters an attempt is made to sketch the life of the people and the ceremonies through which a Kipsigis passes from birth to death. Some ceremonies cannot be described except in barest outline as they are strictly for women only, and many of the men's ceremonies may only be attended by those already initiated in them.

A young wife is very happy when she finds herself with child, as it is the worst of misfortunes for women to be childless. This is mainly because of their natural fondness for children and partly because childless people have nobody to look after them in their old age. An important consideration is that the spirits of members of the family are reincarnated in the children. Children also ensure that property (cattle) is handed on from generation to generation in the family. The prospective mother (*Tamunet*) confides in her women friends and the month of pregnancy is noted. They estimate birth to take place towards the end of the ninth month, though it is said in some cases to be deferred until the tenth or eleventh. The *Tamunet* informs her husband at once, as the men are as anxious for children as the women. If the husband has not sufficient milk from his own cows, beer must be prepared in advance so that people may be invited to a beer party. In return every guest presents two large gourds of milk at stated times, from the eighth month of pregnancy till three months after the birth.

One small ceremony takes place during pregnancy, *Ngorayikap Kotuswa* (the garment of the mouths). Strictly speaking, it should only be performed during first child pregnancies but, as it cannot take place before the *Katunisiet* ceremony (see p. 76) (which is often postponed for several years after marriage), the *Kotuswa* ceremony is often performed for subsequent pregnancies. At the fourth month, the husband's clan sacrifices a goat and at the eighth month, the wife's family make a similar sacrifice. The skin of the animal is dressed and cleaned of hair but the legs are not cut off in the normal way. This skin is worn until the confinement and is kept till after the *Katumetap !akwet* and *Kesanda* ceremonies of childhood (see p. 52).

Two or three months before the birth, the husband leaves home and sleeps in a neighbouring *sigiroinet*. There is no prohibition on working during pregnancy and every woman does as much as she feels able to. The people of the *kokwet* are always willing to help unless the woman has made herself unpopular. The *Chebiosetap Sigisyo* is only called in when the labour pains begin. She is more than a midwife and is accorded great respect, as she carries out the ceremonies necessary after birth as

well as attending the accouchement. All the birth ceremonies are attended only by women. The names of children show that birth may take place within or without the home. A father must not see his child for at least a month and preferably for two months. A very anxious father may, however, steal a look at his child by hiding in the bush near the house.

When a child is born it is given two names, one of which refers to his or her *Kurenet*, that is the man or woman who when living embodied the spirit which enters into the new born child. As soon as the child is born, the *Chebiosetap Sigisyo* (with the help of the female relatives and friends present) proceeds to ascertain whose spirit has entered into the child. Various deceased persons are proposed, apparently to the baby. The midwife will ask: "Are you Arap Mibe?" and then will wait for as long as an hour for a reply. If the child sneezes, this is taken as indicating an affirmative answer and it is known that the child has received the spirit of Arap Mibe. If the baby fails to sneeze within a reasonable time, the woman asks: "Are you Arap Keter?" and again waits for the affirmative answer, and so on until at last the *Kurenet* is ascertained. The first names proposed are those of the nearest deceased relatives on the male side: father's father, father's brothers and so on. If there is no response to these names, more remote relations will be mentioned. The sneezing is not artificially produced, but is a natural reflex action in most newly born children; no snuff or any other substance is given to make the child hasten the reflex action. When the child has sneezed and so confirmed its *Kurenet*, the two or three women present laugh three times if it is a girl child and four times if a boy. The ordinary word for 'laugh' is *rori* and for 'laughter', *roriot*, but for this formal laugh at birth the verb is *yas* and the noun *yaset*. It is not done to give intimation to men outside as men do not approach near a house during a confinement. It is possibly an answer to the spirit.

The name given from the *Kurenet* usually refers to some incident connected with the *Kurenet's* death. In the case of boys the name often refers to the *Kurenet's* cattle. Occasionally the child takes the actual name of the *Kurenet*, so that a small child may be called *Arap* ('the son of') So and So. So firmly is it believed that the child really has the spirit of the *Kurenet*, and is in fact the same person, that his or her mother, when using terms of endearment, will address the child for many years by the *Kurenet's* name, the names she would have used in addressing the *Kurenet* when he was alive. A mother will say to her small child: Eat it all up, *Pondetap Yugoy* (husband's father). "Does it hurt you, *Pamongun* (father in the broadest sense)?". Sometimes two children of different families will have the same *Kurenet*. This division of the spirit between two or more living bodies causes the Kipsigis no logical difficulty. The converse also occurs for, in the Kabarangwek clan, every child of whatever sex has two spirits, one male and one female.

It is difficult to know to what extent the spirit is called or whether it comes of its own accord. The word used when speaking of the coming of the spirit is *kur* (call), and the name *Kurenet* contains the same root.

Nevertheless, the Kipsigis always speak as if the decision to come rested with the spirit. Cases are known where spirits have been said by the *Chebiosetap Sigisyo* to quarrel over the privilege of coming. If labour pains are severe and birth is delayed, the attendant women ascertain the *Kurenet* before birth takes place. Questions are posed urgently: "Will you come, So and So?" and name after name is given in succession until the child is born. If a woman has stillborn children in several pregnancies (unless this is caused by a known disease), it is supposed that the spirits are angry with the family and *Chebsageywek* are consulted to find the cause and the remedy.

The death of a relation is sometimes ascertained by this naming ceremony. If a man has been absent a long time and his whereabouts are uncertain, his name may be called by the women. If his spirit enters into the child, it is then known that the absent one is dead. When a person dies it is supposed that his spirit remains for a few days in the vicinity of the place where he died. This is recorded in many *Kurenet* names. If the spirit is reincarnated in a child only a few days after the death of the *Kurenet*, a special class of names is formed recording the fact: '*Kimoru-Kamngetuny*' or 'he who does not lie at *Kamngetuny*'—the place of the lions. This signifies that the man had died at *Kamngetuny*, but his spirit had entered the body of a child soon after death and did not linger about the place where death had occurred. If a spirit comes a second time to the same family, after the child to whom it came on the first occasion has died, the second child is always called *Kitur*, whether boy or girl. A few *Kurenet* names begin with *Chebo*, meaning 'belonging to'. This prefix is to be distinguished from the quasi-feminine prefix, *Chep*, for the names beginning with *Chebo* often happen to be girls' names. The nickname, *Chebotibik*, however, is a man's name given to a man who has had permission to attend the girls' initiation.

Although even the smallest child is conspicuously unafraid of the dark, at night all Kipsigis avoid the neighbourhood of a place where a corpse is known to have been placed. This custom is not prompted by fear but by their reluctance to see the hyena, which may be devouring the corpse. If they have to pass such a place at night, they shout, not on account of the spirit, but to scare the hyena away.

The *Kainetap Musarek* may be called the common name. It is the one by which a man's sons are known, with the prefix *arap*, or 'son of', when they are grown up. It is usually given to commemorate some circumstance attending the birth of the child. It is not clear why it is called *Musarek*, or malt food, as none of this food is used at the ceremony, though other ceremonial food is prepared. After a woman is grown up, her *kainetap musarek* is used only by her father, mother or uncle.

When a child is a few months old, the mother, aunt or other female relative takes a gourd of milk to an old man, who had been a great warrior in his day, and receives from him or his wife *Salanik*. These are chants which were improvised and sung by his wife or sweetheart as a tribute to some of the warrior's exploits. From these chants

certain words (also called *Salanik*) are taken as names for the child. A *Salanyat* always has the prefix *Tap* (*Tab* or *Tam*), whether it is for a boy or a girl. Girls are very commonly called by a *salanyat*, whereas only close female relations call boys by their *salanik*: Because of this *Tap* is often assumed to be a feminine prefix, whereas it really has no gender and is merely a *salanyat* prefix for children of both sexes. *Salanik* names are often very difficult to interpret as the language is both archaic and cryptic. As a rule married women are only addressed or referred to by their *salanyat* by their close women friends.

Besides these three classes of names many children, as they grow older, acquire a nickname from some personal peculiarity. It is a matter of chance whether the *Kurenet*, the *Kainetap Musarek*, or a nickname (or, in the case of girls, the *salanyat*) becomes the usual name by which a child is known. All these names are used in speaking to children only, except that a man may be addressed by a nickname by another man. Occasionally by the sanction of time a nickname becomes the normal name of a man and may then be used by women and children. There is also a small class of nicknames which are given to husbands by their wives. Although they are the only names wives may use to their husbands, such names are also used between men who are close friends.

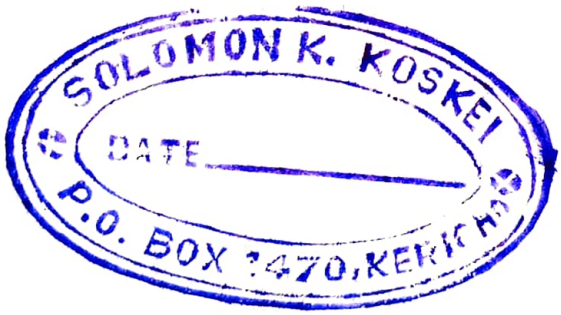
Every child has three names and usually acquires a nickname as a fourth. Sometimes parents use one name while child friends use another. After coming out from initiation young men are no longer called by any of these names, except that sometimes a particularly apposite nickname is retained. The father's *kainetap musarek* is taken with the prefix *arap* (*arab*, *aram*). Occasionally the *kurenet* or a nickname is used, with the same prefix, to distinguish between sons. Less commonly, the father's brother's name may be taken for the same reason. A man may, therefore, legitimately use more than one name. The derivation of *arap* may be from *ar*, the stem of *aruwet*, plural *arek*, the young of any animal, and *ap*, of, but the curious plural, *oryop*, throws doubt on this simple derivation.

The following examples show how confusing Kipsigis names can be to a western mind. Arap Mobwai, who was known when a child by his *kurenet* name of Kimibe, had by his two wives three sons and one daughter. On the death of his second wife he committed suicide by hanging. His sons were all called Arap Mibe, although Kimibe was his *kurenet* name and not his *kainetap musarek*. The second son died at *Kamngetuny* and left a daughter. The youngest son, whose *kainetap musarek* is Kipsang, has two sons. The names of the elder boy are: Kiptonui, his *kainetap musarek*, which is not used; Chilge, from his *kurenet* (his grandfather, Arap Mobwai); this is derived from *Chil*, squeeze and *kadit*, neck, on account of the *kurenet's* suicide, and is the name by which he is always known; Taplitgoi, his *salanyat*, which is only used by his aunt. When he is grown up he will be called Arap Sang from his father's *kainetap musarek;* his sons when grown up will be called Arap Tonui and the name Chilge by which he is always known will drop out of use. The younger brother's names are:

Kipketer, his *kainetap musarek*, by which he is usually known; Morukamngetuny, from his *kurenet* (his uncle, the middle Arap Mibe), who died at *Kamngetuny;* this name is commonly used by his aunt and other female relatives; Tabutchebuluny, his *salanyat*, which is sometimes used by his aunt; Chebchilat, his nickname which is occasionally used. When he is grown up he will be called Arap Sang, like his brother, and his grown up son's name will be Arap Keter. (Only one *salanyat* has been given above, but every child has several of these names, most of which are hardly ever used.)

The two normal forms of address to married women are: *Kobo*, (the owner of) prefixed to the name of one of her children, e.g. Kobo Sawe, the mother of Sawe; her husband often addressed her thus. *Neb* or *Nebo* (who belongs to) prefixed to her husband's name, e.g. the wife of Arap Sinei would be called Neb'arap Sinei. For a childless woman the use of names often follows the pattern: Kolil, *kainetap musarek*, which is almost forgotten; Koe, *kurenet* name, never used; *salanik:* Taplule, used by most women friends; Tabarsumat and Tapkelal, used by a few women friends; Chepkatam, a nickname by which she is universally known. A typical set of girl's names: Chebkemoi, *kainetap musarek;* Koe, *kurenet;* both these are rarely used; Taprandich, a *salanyat*, which is used by parents and close friends; Kitur, a special name given on account of her *kurenet;* this is the most commonly used of her names. She has no nickname.

APPENDIX 7: Salanik.



Chapter VIII

CHILDHOOD

UNTIL they reach the age of five or six the children play near the house, 'look after the house' as it is called, while the grown ups go about their multifarious activities. Children get up before sunrise and breakfast between seven and nine o'clock, when the herds go forth to graze. If there is no shortage of food, a good mother sees they are fed again in the middle of the day, about four in the afternoon and finally in the evening after dark. As they get a little older, it is the children's task to look after the lambs and kids, to bring them to their mothers in the evening and to put them away under their upturned baskets for the night. Children soon become expert at tethering the most obstreperous goats to their pegs round the inside wall of the house. This is done without fuss or noise as inside the house children are very quiet and well-behaved, however noisy they may be outside.

From the time they begin herding sheep and goats until they go to initiation, the boys are engaged in looking after stock. Their life is very free and the only trouble they usually get into is when they lose stock, or allow it to get into the cultivated fields. Girls sometimes have a harder time, as they have to look after younger brothers and sisters, whom they often have to carry about on their backs or hips before they are old and strong enough for such a weight. Girls also herd sheep and goats when boys are not available. In the weeding season, one of their chief occupations is to go round in small parties hand weeding the fields of their neighbours or relations. Though tedious, this is easy work at which they sing and make merry.

Besides herding and manual work children also learn how to observe. They show endless interest in the plant, animal and insect worlds among which they spend their days. Quite small children can name almost every tree, bush, grass or weed, and describe where they grow and what their flowers and seeds are like; how the insects behave; where the birds nest and what they say when they sing. One instance will illustrate their surprising knowledge of natural history: At certain times of the year a continual loud musical buzzing is heard, when there is not a bee in sight. Children say the sound comes from the drone bees away up out of sight, who do no work but idle and sing all day, like boys and girls during initiation, and then go home to the hive, when the working bees have gathered enough food for them. Then the drones kill the workers, by nipping their necks, and eat up the honey. The children say the bees can be seen quite easily if an arrow with a bunch of white feathers is shot up into the air.

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At play Kipsigis children exhibit two characteristic traits: they seldom quarrel or compete with one another. This dislike of competing to the very finish persists through manhood. Two popular pastimes are the swing (*Chebsongininwet*), made of lianas in the forest, and the slide (*Chebkochutwet*), made with wet earth or cow dung on a steep slope down to a river. Spinning tops (*Kiptanging*) are made out of *Kimolonik*, the round hard fruits of a small tree, which are pierced with a straight twig of thick grass; these are spun on an upturned skin garment. Children often play at 'Cattle' with Sodom apples, which are always known, even to adults, as *Tugap Labot*, the cattle of the *labotwet* bush. A tiny house with a *Kaptich* or cattle kraal is built, the cattle are herded, driven to water at a small dam and so on.

Asking some of the hundreds of riddles (*Tanguchik*) is a very special form of amusement. These are evidently of very ancient origin, as they are couched in archaic language, very difficult to understand. Children often give the correct answer without understanding the riddle or the answer in the least; or a wrong and quite inappropriate answer is given from a different riddle. Some riddles seem to be simple and to have merely a surface meaning. In others there is a play on words, mention of unknown districts, or reference to tribes now widely separated. These probably indicate the ancient origin of the riddle. *Tanguchik* may not be spoken by adults, who pretend to have no knowledge of them, since such childish things are supposed to have been left behind in the initiation. Riddles may be asked by children only at night and when they are lying down. The first child says *Tanguch* ('say'), 'I have thought of one': the second child accepts by saying *Chong;* the first child then gives the riddle and the second the answer, if he knows it. It is not known what *Tanguch* and *Chong* mean. The verb *Tangoi* (continuative tense, *Tanguche*) means to do something without object, thoughtlessly, futilely; the noun, *Tangoita*, is often used in reply to the question: 'What are these children doing?', *Tangoita, ap lagok kityo* ('Nothing, just playing as is the custom of children'); *Kiptangoian* is a man who plays about foolishly and behaves like a child. These words seem to indicate the regard in which riddles are held by adult Kipsigis. A wager is presumed to be made when a riddle is asked and, if the acceptor fails to answer correctly, he has to forfeit an imaginary cow or ox.

Hunting with bow and arrow is a popular pastime. At first the small children use weapons improvised out of any old sticks. Gradually these are improved until they become quite serviceable weapons, with which many children become expert at shooting birds. A special arrow, *Koisit*, with a heavy conical head fixed with the base of the cone foremost, is used for this pursuit. Small children are not allowed to use arrows with iron points. Competitions are held with these cone headed arrows with bracken stalks as targets. A similar game is played by throwing small sharpened sticks (*Mosigisik*) at stationary and moving targets. In both these competitions the phrases used are comparable with those connected with the Tanguchik. The challenger says: *Kojot* and the acceptor replies: *Kwil ! Anomin, kot iyotge chepkam*

en Nandi konyo kolaun. The meaning of the challenge and acceptance words is lost; the other words of the acceptor mean: 'I will take you on until you send for your sister in Nandi to come and carry them for you' (that is, the bracken, as I shall knock so many down).

Musical instruments are few, primitive and little used. Singing, however, seems a natural habit, which is thoroughly enjoyed from early childhood onwards. Girls and boys, but especially the former, early learn to sing in chorus, both spontaneously while at work in the fields and also, all through the drier part of the year from October till the end of March. Just after dark when supper is over, the singers congregate by arrangement near the house of someone who is popular amongst the children. The numbers vary from ten to fifty, or even more, of all ages. Sometimes the boys form one circle and the girls another, but if the numbers are not large they all form up in one group. The singing is always accompanied by dancing, or rather body movements of all kinds: head, neck, hands, arms, waist, hips, knees and, least of all, the feet. The formation is not important but is usually a circle which revolves gradually. In the case of girls, often two opposing lines are formed which advance and retreat with the singing. There is always a leader and a chorus, but the lead changes from time to time without a pause or signal. The temporary leader has no authority over the singers and the whole procedure is spontaneous. The leader usually improvises songs about friends or current events and the chorus contributes the refrain. The words of the chorus are sometimes unintelligible, even to the singers, and are occasionally of foreign origin, such as Masai or Kikuyu. Most songs do not last more than a year, but some particularly catchy ones, in a constantly amended form, remain in the repertory for as long as four or five years. Sometimes there are two leaders who perform a kind of duet. The two parts are not sung simultaneously but the result is harmonious. At the end of a season when the children have got into practice, two leaders and choruses, at night or out of sight of each other in neighbouring fields, come in at the right moment and change the lead without hesitation. At the beginning of a season or when a new song is being learnt, there are sometimes breakdowns, which cause much good-natured laughter. Girls seem to excel as singers and their dance movements are both more pronounced and more graceful than those of the boys, who confine themselves more to the singing. There is little or no licentiousness. Such conduct is not natural to the Kipsigis and is a most serious offence among children. Should it occur, the parent of the offender has to pay a cow as a fine, but it is very rarely necessary to invoke this punishment.

A curious difference between the singing of children and adults is that the former sing only outside and at the very top of their voices, while adults usually sing indoors in a low almost humming voice. An exception to this custom is during the *tiendo*, song and dance, in connection with three of the initiation ceremonies, including the going in and the coming forth. Even then songs are only sung in full voice by the temporary leader (see p. 62). Besides these choral songs, there

are during the initiation (and at some other ceremonies) *Kaandaet* (hymns) and songs of praise, or more literally, respect. Lastly there is the *Kachaet*, or *Salet*, in which a girl or woman sings of the exploits of her lover or husband in a hushed half voice. The *Kaandaet*, and special songs such as the *Chepketilet*, *Kipaiesit* and *Chelimen* are described in the chapter on the initiation (see p. 60).

Only four musical instruments are played regularly by the Kipsigis. The war horn (*Ikondet*) is made usually of waterbuck (or preferably roan antelope) horn in the thinner part, with a buffalo horn mouthpiece. It is only used for a call to war or the war dance. Children imitate it by making a horn from the giant groundsel (*Serengwet*), at the season when this plant poles. The *Kibugandet* is a four-stringed instrument without a sounding box, which is plucked with the fingers. The *Ketuba* is a similar eight-stringed instrument with a skin sounding box. The strings are made of finely prepared strips of hide, usually oribi, if red duiker is not procurable. Very few men know how to play this instrument well and women never attempt it. The four strings on the right seem to correspond in tone to the four strings on the left. Possibly the *ketuba* is a recent introduction; it is said that in the old war days it was disliked, as the approach of enemies or the war call might not be audible when the instrument was being played. This objection did not extend to the softer sounding *kibugandet*. When playing either of these instruments, the artist sings to his own accompaniment. The *Ndururet*, which is not very common, is a simple flute with two holes for the fingers. Drums are not used by the Kipsigis and are despised as noisy instruments popular with their western neighbours.

During the period from childhood to initiation, there are six ceremonies, which take place at no fixed time. Some of them are of very minor importance. *Lotetap Kelek* is the extraction of the two front lower permanent teeth, after the milk teeth have all been discarded. No ceremony is attached to the rite, except that the teeth are extracted in the morning at the *mabwaita* and placed in the seretiot grass at its base. During the operation the child faces east. The meaning of the word *Lotet* and the significance of the extraction are unknown. The drawing of milk teeth is called *Utiet* and the teeth are thrown to the east. The normal extraction of permanent teeth is known as *Palet* ('digging') and the teeth may be dropped anywhere.

Rutet Itik (the piercing of the ears) is scarcely a ceremony but rather a universal custom carried out for adornment. The child faces east at the *mabwaita* in the morning, while the operation is performed. The holes made in the ears are kept open by small smooth sticks usually painted with red clay (*ngariet*). The size of the sticks is gradually increased week by week until the holes reach a diameter of about one-and-a-half inches. Piercing takes place when children are between ten and fifteen years old. A man with unpierced ears is nicknamed *Kiplikwop*, a very unpopular name.

The *Katumetap Lakwet* (causing to bear) and *Kalagetap Ngoriet* (wearing of the garment) are really two parts of the same ceremony, though there may be an interval of a few days or even more than a

year between them. The ceremony is carried out in the early morning partly in the house by women alone, and partly outside at the *mabwaita* by both men and women; men must be present to sacrifice the goat. From the skin of this animal small strips are cut, which are worn by the men as finger rings and by the women as bracelets. A ring is also placed on the child's finger or wrist. A long strip of the skin is prepared for the mother to wear either round the waist or, in some clans, across one shoulder and under the other arm. Sewn with cowrie shells, this is called the *Semwet* and is kept for other ceremonial occasions. The remainder of the skin with the feet intact is called the *Kesenda*. This garment is worn by the mother after the third day for a girl child, and after the fourth day for a boy. The verb *Kesen* means 'to carry a child on the back'. *Kesenda* also means 'own brother or sister' and probably signifies one who was carried on the same back. A gourd used in the final marriage ceremony is also known as *Kesenda*. (A garment similar to the *Kesenda* is prescribed by the *Chebsageyot* (woman doctor) for certain cases of chronic sickness and barrenness. Those who wear, or have worn, such a garment to cure sickness and have, therefore, been initiated into certain rites, shake hands at once on meeting and spit, or rather make a formal pretence at spitting, into the hands before doing so.) At the *mabwaita* a little milk is sprinkled on a goat, especially if the child is ailing, and an elder offers a prayer for the child's welfare. Later on the *Chebiosetap Tumdo* asks more blessings in the house and carries out further rites not witnessed by the men.

The *Kabarangwek* clan carry out the *Kalagetap Ngoriet*, or *Kesenda*, ceremony in the following manner. Many clans have in the east wall of the house a concealed door, plastered over so that it is indistinguishable from the rest of the wall. In certain ceremonies this door is opened by the owner of the house. Although it is called *Kurgapsan* (the door of relations by marriage), it now has very little reference to this relationship, but is rather a ceremonial door by which participants in the ceremony enter the house. Before the ceremony, a few adult relations and special friends of both sexes are invited to drink the ceremonial beer; usually there are more men than women, as women are not great beer drinkers. When the ceremony is about to take place, everyone must leave the house except those who have themselves initiated a child of their own into this ceremony. No unmarried person may be present.

Those who take part in the ceremony are normally a few old men of the clan, the father and mother of the boy, the boy himself and a few relatives. An old woman, a relative of the father, is usually the *Chebiosetap Tumdo* and takes the principal woman's part in arranging the ceremony. A young male relative acts as the *Motiriot*, whose duty it is (as in all the initiation ceremonies), to instruct the initiate in all details regarding behaviour and so on. In the centre of the floor just below the fire a beer pot is placed in its usual position. On the east (*Njor*), the old men, dressed in their ordinary clothes, sit with their backs to the *kurgapsan;* opposite to them on the other side of the

pot, west (*Koima*), the father and mother, the boy and the *motiriot* and his wife sit on a large ox skin. These are all dressed in fine beaded cloaks of calf, sheep or goat skin. The beer tubes (*Rogorosiek*), from which the guests have been drinking, are all removed from the pot except four. On two of these a piece of the sacred *senendet* creeper is tied. Outside at the *mabwaita* is a gathering of those women who may not come to the ceremony within the house. The *Chebiosetap Tumdo*, wearing necklets of cowries sewn in leather and with similar ornaments draped over one shoulder and hanging to the waist, comes to the waiting group. She carries in her hand two collars (*malingotik*), made of the tubular sections of *mosoriot*, the thorny creeper used in basket making. One of these collars is subsequently worn by the child after the ceremony. In the case of a small child it is worn for a year, but in the case of big boys it is worn for two or three days only. The second collar is discarded and its significance is unknown: the Kipsigis say it is used in the ceremony to keep the first collar company. The *Chebiosetap Tumdo* kneels opposite the principal old man, so that the beer pot is between them, and holds out the necklets in her cupped hands across the pot. The old man sips a little beer from his *rogoret*, squirts it into the palm of each of her hands in turn and murmurs a blessing in a low voice. The woman then rises, walks round the *teretap mai* and passes under the four *rogorosiek* held by the boy's father, the *motiriot* and two old men. When the blessing has been repeated three times in the house, she goes outside, walks round the *mabwaita* and there gives one more blessing to bring the tally of her blessings to the obligatory number of four.

A short interval now occurs, during which the spectators return their tubes to the beer pot and pass the time with sips of beer and subdued but merry conversation. After a while all but the four *rogorosiek* are removed again, and the old woman re-enters the house with a large lump of native made butter and some sprays of seretiot grass. She plasters a portion of the butter, in a conical shaped blob, over the father's and *motiriot's turiet* or fontanelles. Having arranged sprays of the grass in the butter, she then anoints the breast and legs of the chief participants, including the boy. The chief elder then takes the four *rogorosiek* in one hand and, after sipping from them in turn, passes them clockwise to the *motiriot*. The *motiriot* takes two of the tubes in each hand and sips from them in turn; he then passes them to the boy's father and to the women, all of whom take four sips, before passing them to the boy who sips from only one of the tubes. This process is repeated, so that the *rogorosiek* go round the pot four times. The old man then passes one tube tied with *senendet* round one side of the pot and a plain one round the other side. These are both taken by the *motiriot*, who sips from them, while the elder sips from the two he has retained. After this ceremonial sipping, all the participants rise and form a procession, except the old man who holds aloft the four *rogorosiek*, so that the procession of five passes beneath them, with the two men leading and the boy in the rear. After the procession has proceeded three times round the *teretap mai*

and under the tubes, the two women leave the house. The men and boy go round the pot a fourth time and possibly the women make a fourth circuit of the *mabwaita* outside. Leaving the house by the *kurgapsan*, the boy's father and the *motiriot* anoint the heads and faces of all the spectators with butter. The ceremony terminates with a blessing from the elders.

Koretoetap Lakwet is a ceremony which is not practised by the 'Nandi' clans of the Kipsigis. It may be carried out at any time during childhood and consists in presenting the child with a cowrie shell, which he or she wears until it is handed on to the next younger brother or sister. One cowrie shell is thus passed on from one child to another through the whole family. Each family begins again (*tau*) with a new shell. *Koretoet* is the noun from *reto*, lead away water (in a furrow) and is connected with the commoner form, *reu*, lead water hither. There are differences among the clans in the method of performing this ceremony: some prepare malt food for it; others, such as the *Kaberangwek*, look on it as an important ceremony which must be carried out round the *teretapmai*.

The *Kaburburet* ceremony is performed every year or every two or three years for all adult and child *Tegerisiek*. A *Tegeret* is a person whose next elder brother or sister died before the *Tegeret* was born. Although this is one of the few ceremonies clearly connected with spirits, it is directed to *Asista* rather than to the spirits of the family ancestors. When the ceremony is for women and children, *musarek* (malt food) only is drunk, but for the men's ceremony beer is prepared. Both ceremonies are attended by both sexes. *Tegerisiek* are thought to be particularly subject to influences from their own spirits. If they are in poor health, becoming thin and are generally not thriving, this ceremony is performed to recruit their strength. A number of women *Tegerisiek* with children of all ages gather at the house, where it has been arranged to hold the ceremony. It must be held in the morning; about eight o'clock is the usual time. The proceedings are supervised by a respected old woman as *Chebiosetap Tumdo*, or Mistress of Ceremonies. The women and children seat themselves in a row, with their legs straight out, and form a curve on the west side of the *mabwaita*, facing the sun. The *Chebiosetap Tumdo*, who is cheery and full of fun, opens the proceedings by mixing, in the hollow of a stool set at the foot of the *mabwaita*, powdered salt lick, cow dung, milk and *musarek* to form a thin whitish paste. Taking in each hand a bunch of seretiot, she dips the grass in the mixture and sprinkles and then wipes every visible part of the body of every *Tegeriot* in turn. As she is herself a *Tegeriot* she takes her seat with the others and is sprinkled in her turn by another woman, a spectator who is not a *Tegeriot*. The men present then chant a part of the *Chepketilet* tune sung at the great initiation ceremony, followed by the women who take up the song in answer: *Tegeriot komandil! O sachin tegerion Asis! Sachin tegeriot, Sachin komandil*, "Pray ye to God for the *Tegeriot*. Pray for the *Tegeriot* that he may benefit from the ceremony". (*Mandil* is the verb describing this ceremonial treatment.)

The rules regulating the sprinkling procedure are very complicated, as the following example shows: 'A' sprinkled his son, his wife, his deceased brother's wife and her daughter; he could not sprinkle his sister, not because of their blood relationship but because she is the initiation mother of his wife, that is, his 'mother-in-law' (*Poger*). 'B' could not sprinkle 'C's' wife, though she is a woman of 'B's' clan, because 'B' had married a girl of 'C's' clan, that is, 'C's' wife has become a member of 'C's' clan and 'B' has married a woman of that clan, so they are *Konyitenik* and the women are *Poger* to 'B'.

When the singing is ended, the *Tegerisiek* assume a kneeling position, while the *Chebiosetap Tumdo* hands them all in turn a bowl of *musarek*. Many scarcely touch the bowl with their lips, not for hygienic reasons but because it is impolite to drink, even ceremonially, from the same bowl as elder people, or any person to whom respect must be shown. (Many Kipsigis do object on hygienic grounds to drinking out of the gourds or other receptacles of people, whose state of health is not known.) The participants then rise from their knees and, sitting down where they will, drink freely of the *musarek*. Finally, everyone is anointed with butter by the *Chebioset* and the ceremony is over.

A *Tegeriot* child always has a small tuft of hair left on its head whenever the head is shaved. This tuft is left over the *turiet*, or fontanelle, and is called *sungunyet*. When the child is still small a circular ornament of a bead pattern, sewn on leather fringed with chainlets, is worn attached to the *sungunyet* on special occasions, but transferred to the neck for ordinary wear. As the child grows up this is discarded, and even the *sungunyet* is shaved off, for they become ashamed of it. But every *Tegeriot* wears on the wrist a special brass ring, on the right arm for boys and on the left for girls. This is worn through life. The *turiet*, or fontanelle, seems to have some special significance, since in many ceremonies a lump of butter is placed on it; also one of the positions connected with omens is called *Turio*.

Any *Tegeriot* boy may be called by the name *Tiongik* (animal) and any girl, *Chesunguny*, she of the *sungunyet*. These names sometimes stick to the children and become their normal names. A mother refers to her *Tegeriot* child as 'this little animal' and, at some ceremonies, e.g. the opening of the way, *Tegerisiek* wear cloaks made from blue monkey skins, while others wear cloaks of goat skins. The Kipsigis do not consider cattle, sheep and goats as being *tiongik*, but comprehend all wild animals down to the smallest insect within that term. Dogs and cats, although domestic animals, are thought of as being *tiongik;* cats have been introduced recently, but are preferred to dogs who are considered as being dirty animals.

A curious rite is performed if more than one brother or sister has died before the birth of a *Tegeriot*. On the day the child is born it is taken by the *Chebiosetap Tumdo* to a much frequented path. When a passerby sees a woman with a newly born baby sitting by the path, he or she knows at once the significance of the occurrence. He plucks a few blades of grass (not leaves of bushes), places them on the child's head, rubs a little earth on its forehead, breast and legs and says a

prayer for its welfare. Such a child may be called *Kibuiwa* if a boy, or *Chebuiwa* if a girl, from *buiwet*, dust or earth. Occasionally the child is called *Chemorut*, from the couch grass which often grows near paths. but it is not necessarily this grass which is placed on the child's head, Some omit this rite and await the next *Kaburburet* ceremony described above.

APPENDIX 8: An Evening Scene.
9: Riddles.

Chapter IX

THE INITIATION

THE period of the initiation is the most important time in the life of the Kipsigis. Not only is it the critical point in the life of the initiate, but the whole district, men, women and children, are engaged either in preparations for the ceremonies, or in participation in the dances. The critical period of puberty is over and the children pass from irresponsible childhood to adult tribal membership. The circumcision, which is a distinguishing feature of their initiation, sets them (and the kindred tribes) apart from the uncircumcised of other tribes. It is, in fact, almost a national event, which binds together not only the Kipsigis but all the other tribes of the group. Although circumcision is of the greatest importance, the surgical operation is only the initial item in a series of ceremonies and a course of instruction, which last from four-and-a-half to eight months. During this period the children undergo instruction in the customs and behaviour proper to Kipsigis men and women. Before initiation, children are not considered as being Kipsigis but only as the children of Kipsigis. During initiation, they are supposed to discard all childish ways, to learn to control their feelings and to behave in a way superior to that followed by the uninitiated. The very existence of childish things, such as the *tanguchik* riddles, is assumed to be forgotten. Initiation may be considered perhaps as a rebirth, of which circumcision is the outward sign. In this connection, it may be significant that *siget* means 'birth' and *sigisiet*, 'birth in general'; this might be the root word from which the tribal name has been derived; if this is so, *Kipsigisindet* might mean 'one who has been born'. After initiation, the names by which an initiate was known as a child are dropped and he is called 'the son of his father's name'. Children born of a mother before she has entered initiation are prevented from breathing, so that they cannot be said to have lived. This is probably accounted for by the fact that such a child is the child of a child and not the child of a *Chepsigisindet*, so that an ancestral spirit cannot be called for it. The legend of the self-sacrifice of the *Chebiosok an Pore* (see p. 23) to obtain immortality of the spirit is probably bound up with this idea of re-birth. The expressions used for entering, and for coming out of, the initiation stress the idea of a complete change, a journey to a new country, or entry to a new country through the opening of a gate or road. *Bendi Banda*, 'they are going on a journey with a special purpose'; *Ngeetu tarusiek*, 'the initiates are coming forth'; *Keyatyin Oret*, 'one opens the road for them'.

Kipsigis practice of circumcision may be very old, but the only indication that it may be of ancient origin is that it is carried out at puberty, as was the custom in other old cultures. The Kipsigis observe great secrecy about most of the ceremonies of the initiation. The principle governing attendance at all ceremonies is that only those may attend who have themselves been initiated to the particular ceremony. Between the sexes and between children and adults, secrecy is very strict indeed; any breach is followed by the curse of death in which the Kipsigis have complete faith. No woman is ever supposed to know what occurs during the boys' initiation, and vice versa. Even husband and wife never divulge the respective procedures to each other. There is one exception to this rule: a man (or a woman) may attend the whole series of ceremonies of the other sex, if five or more of his children have died in succession, or if all his brothers and sisters have died. Permission must be sought from the *motirenik*, the elders and the old women and is not easily granted. Such attendance at the ceremonies of the opposite sex is called by a special name, *Yaiwet*. A man who attends is called *Chebotibik* and his son *Arap Chebotibik*, 'belonging to the girls'. A woman who attends the men's ceremonies receives no name, but if she bears a child it is called *Kimenjo* or *Chemenjo*, 'at the boys' initiation hut.'

The Kipsigis go to initiation in three main batches during every age set of about twenty-one years. The time at which the boys go is regulated by the number reaching puberty and the plentifulness of grain, milk and vegetables. Consequently, boys' initiation usually starts at harvest time, though this sometimes leads to a shortage of food later in the dry season. Not only must the initiates be well fed, but large quantities of grain are required for malt food and beer to entertain the relations and friends who come to the ceremonies from all parts. Girls go to initiation in smaller batches every two years or so. As they are married immediately after coming out, they are initiated as soon as they are of a suitable age. Apart from the question of adequate food supplies, initiation is never begun in the *karatet* year (see p. 12) nor in August (see p. 21).

When the elders have decided that initiation is to take place, prospective initiates with their parents go visiting in the district to find people willing to feed the children during the initiation period. The custom is for one family to feed from two to eight candidates. This entails a great deal of work and expense, which is not repaid in full by the traditional remuneration of one she goat or ewe for every child. This animal, which is called *Chemngobait* (from *pai*, feed), is particularly valued, because it must be replaced if it dies, fails to have lambs or if its progeny die. Thus the *Chemngobait* is the pick of the flock. It becomes the personal property of the woman who cooks for the initiates and not that of her husband, although he supplies at least as much food to the initiates as his wife. His special care is milk and meat, but his wife may have to carry the food she has cooked half a mile twice a day. She may not cook at, or approach near to, the boys' hut. The man and woman who feed the initiates thereafter take the

position of father and mother (in the broadest sense of these terms). They are called *Pamongo* and *Koruchon* and *Iyoo* respectively, in the same way as if they were the real parents. They have considerable influence on the children, especially those of their own sex, whom they visit daily during initiation, in the case of the boys, while the girls live in the woman's house for the initiation period. In subsequent years these 'Godchildren' pay visits to their initiation parents, to whom especially in old age they owe duties that cannot be avoided without dishonour. Not only are the 'parents' treated with the special respect accorded to all parents, but regulations as to *Njor* and *Koima* and sleeping in houses are the same as if they were real parents. Thus a man, whose wife had been looked after by his sister during initiation, may no longer call the latter by name or sleep in her house for, although she is his sister, she is also *Poger*, or mother-in-law, to him.

At the first stage of initiation, the circumcision, there is no beer, but malt and flour are required in large quantities. All the relations of the initiates, who live within two or three miles of the initiation centre, make malt food to feed the multitude of visitors, who come from all parts to attend the celebrations and to give their young relatives a good send off. The circumcision ceremony occurs in the early morning, but the crowds begin to gather at dusk on the evening before, and spend most of the night singing and dancing, chaffing and joking and generally making merry. A crowd gathers at the home of the initiate's parents or guardians, where a fire is lit at the *mabwaita*. Around this the female relatives, garlanded with *senendet* creeper and carrying eight feet long wands of the *kerundut* plant, sing the praises of their husbands' clans and improvise in praise of the initiate. Few men join this family group, except the father and brothers, who also wear the *senendet* garland, and the boy himself. The other men, decorated with red and white clay paint, form one or more circles and sing the *Chepketilet* song. Some of the children join the group round the *mabwaita*, others form circles and sing by themselves. The usual staidness of demeanour is thrown off: people rush hither and thither to shake hands and to meet and greet old friends from afar. High spirits and good humour are the order for this night and the following day. The solemnest crack jokes and no joke is taken amiss. After the initiate has been anointed with butter on the forehead, breast and legs, the whole party hastens off boisterously to another house where the merriment is continued.

Gradually by about ten in the evening all the house visiting groups congregate at the central open space near the House of the Ceremony. Hundreds of men form an immense circle, link arms and sing the *Chepketilet* chorus, while in the middle stand those who take it in turn to lead the song. The women in their garlands and the hundreds of children congregate round the *mabwaiek* at neighbouring houses to sing, and to seek relations who may be going to the initiation. Though spirits are high and chaff is the order of the night, and jokes are perhaps a little broader than normally permissible, there is no undue licence. Girls going merely to the song and dance (*tiendo*), but not to the

initiation, are under the charge of a married woman and soon after midnight they retire to certain houses reserved for the women. Most of the houses in the neighbourhood are reserved for this purpose. The majority of the men sleep round fires in the open air for the last few hours of the night, but many just sit round the fire and talk till daylight. The crowds are merry, good-tempered and well-behaved. The fact that so many inter-related people are present makes for decency and politeness, for respect for such relations is a basic characteristic of Kipsigis behaviour. Only the initiates, their fathers or guardians and the officiating elder may enter, or even approach near to, the House of Ceremony, to which the boys are escorted from their homes by near relatives.

The *senendet* wreath is worn by the initiate's mother, sisters, father's sister, brother's wife, mother's sister and initiation mother; also by the father or, if the father is not present, the initiate's brother or half brother or, if neither of these is present, the father's brother. *Kerundusiek* wands are carried only by women relatives, either on the mother's or father's side. Anointing is carried out by the maternal uncle, either of the boy's own mother or of his stepmother; if no maternal uncle is present, the function is performed by a near male relation. This appears to be the only occasion on which the maternal uncle (*mama*) takes any conspicuous part in Kipsigis ceremonies. In some cases in the evening, in most cases the next morning, the boy initiate wears his mother's cloak (*koliget*) but never that belonging to a girl. In the evening he also wears necklaces loaned by his sisters, cousins and girl friends, his mother's *merenget* and often *merengonik* of other married relatives. Next morning after circumcision all these are returned, except his mother's *koliget*, which he wears for about a month until the *Labetap Eun* ceremony takes place.

The procedure is very similar in the case of girls. They wear their mother's *koliget* cloaks for one month until the *Labetap Eun*. They are decked out in skins and anklets of colobus monkey by their sweethearts, who also fasten bells on their legs. Thus dressed they dance and sing through the evening until they enter the House of Ceremony, when the finery is removed and returned to the owner in the morning. The girls do not wear men's clothes, but those who are conducted to the ceremony by their sweethearts are given a spear and club to hold during the evening singing, but these are returned to the owners before the girls enter the House of Ceremony.

All the sacred plants (*Korosek*) used at the ceremonies are kept until the initiates come forth as men and women. The *senendaiik* garlands, which are kept in the houses of those who are feeding the children, must not be burnt but must be buried on the dung heap. Those who carried the *Kerundusiek* wands keep them on the roof of their houses and later burn them at the *mabwaita*.

Labetap Eun, the second stage of the initiation, takes place three to four weeks after circumcision. It marks the end of complete seclusion and serious uncleanness. Before the ceremony is performed the initiates may not touch food with their hands. While waiting for the time for the

ceremony to come round, the boys sit by their hut and make collars of very thin strips of certain hardwoods, on which they carve and burn patterns. When the children are later taken by the *motirenik* to visit the *tarusiek*, the children are presented with these collars (*malingotik*). The purpose of the *Labetap Eun* is to enable the initiates to touch things. For a whole month from circumcision they may touch nothing with their hands, except their own clothes and persons. In particular they must not touch household utensils or food. Food is held with large leaves and dipped into soup without touching the pot. The restrictions generally are the same as those resulting from homicide (see p. 28), removal of a corpse (see p. 29) and *Kerekap Lakwet*. Though *Labetap Eun* consists essentially in the ceremonial washing of the hands, *Labet* does not mean 'washing' but indicates rather the purpose of the washing, namely to enable the washer to touch things. *Lab*, the transitive verb 'to touch with the fingers', is used when telling children not to put their fingers into food, and in the expression, *Kilab oiik*, 'the spirits have touched him', an expression used to describe one slightly malformed or mentally deranged.

Even after this ceremony there are many things the initiates may not do, such as cook or light a fire. Those belonging to the 'Nandi' clans may not grind flour, but all the others may do so. All the boys may make bows and arrows, walking sticks and similar wooden articles. Girls may clean the house and the milk gourds and also sew. The male initiates are now free to wander about in secluded places, such as river valleys, forests or thick bush. They are disguised by designs in white clay, which cover the face, body and clothes, so that they are unrecognisable. They avoid all paths as they must not be seen by women. Under the direction of the *motiriot*, children may take them *musarek*. During this period they hunt with the bow and arrow and kill anything from birds to the largest animals. The skins of the birds and smaller animals are later hung in the headdress, which is worn after the *Kayaet* ceremony. In this way they also supplement the food supplied for their sustenance. Girls find some secluded piece of bush or forest near their house, where they sit and sew ornaments and clothes. The *Sirek* dress worn on coming out is not made now, but after the *Kayaet* ceremony.

At this time the daily singing of the initiates begins. The usual word for sing, *tien*, is not used to describe this kind of singing. They sing the morning and evening song, called in the case of boys *Kipoyesit*, and of the girls, *Chelimen*, which are only sung at sunrise and sunset. During the day another type of song, called *Kaandet*, is sung, in which they express their thanks or respect (the comprehensive sentiments expressed by the word, *Tegisto*) to their fathers and mothers in initiation and other friends who may pass by. They also sing in praise of their *puriet* and clan (in much the same way as in the *Chepketilet* song), and also express their preference for the highlands or lowlands. In these songs the lead is taken in turn, with the rest of the singers forming a chorus. Interspersed among the verbal passages are periods of wordless song; the chorus accompaniment is also wordless.

At least a month elapses before the third ceremony, *Ketienchin*, 'one sings to them', is undertaken. The men meet at the house of one of the boy initiate's parents or, in the case of the girls, at the house where they are living. Only those directly concerned with the initiation take part. Any current songs are sung and the only ceremonial song on this occasion is that for the welfare of the *Tegerisiek* (see p. 55). Two jars of beer, called *Maywekap Boyot*, are reserved for the officiating elder and the men who are feeding the initiates. Two pots are similiarly provided for the women: the mothers, mothers in initiation and near relations of the initiates. The preparation of this beer is one of the duties of those who feed the *tarusiek*. The ceremony marks no particular stage in initiation, but consists chiefly in emphasising the teaching which runs through the whole period of initiation, namely that there must be no quarrelling, no anger, no cursing and no bad word must be spoken. *Talosiet*, good behaviour and kindness are insisted on. So strictly is this enforced that any *tarusiot* who uses bad language or quarrels brings a curse upon himself, and will find it very difficult to obtain a wife, for his reputation will spread and no father will give him his daughter in marriage.

Kayaet, the fourth stage, takes place not less than three months after initiation begins. Although after this ceremony the *tarusiek* may go to their homes or on visits to faraway relations, their faces must still not be looked upon by women. They still wear the *Menekobet* dress, to which is added in the case of boys the *Marangochek* headdress, which is made of the long bast fibres of the *Masek* plant and hangs about their faces like flaxen hair. Fathers make long journeys to seek the uncommon *Masek*: this word is also the Kipsigis name for comet.

The girls now put on the leather veil, with which they cover their faces when meeting a member of the other sex. It is a long strip of very thin flexible brown leather (with two small holes for the eyes) which hangs down to the knees. The boys are now called *Kimorongojik* and the girls *Chemerenik*. They may not speak with the opposite sex, and even with their own sex they speak in whispers or subdued voices. They are now allowed to do a certain amount of work which varies according to clan. The girls may clean the house, grind grain, but not cook. Their chief occupation is to sew their new dresses (*Sirek*), which are hemmed and divided with beads, in readiness for the coming out.

The *Kayaet* ceremony takes place at the river. Men and women each have special reserved spots which are used time after time for this purpose. A pool is made by damming the stream till there is sufficient water completely to immerse the initiates, as they are led by their *motirenik* beneath a building erected in the pool. After the immersion the *tarusiek* are escorted back to their *menjosiek*, accompanied by a crowd singing the praises of their *puriosiek*. Sodom apples are cast on to the ground and snatched up, to the accompaniment of the chants used in the *Rotet* ceremony (see p. 11). The procedure is the same in the case of the girls, but they are escorted by a crowd of women instead of men. *Kayaet* means 'causing to do' and refers to the fact that after the ceremony the initiates may go about, travel and do certain work.

There was no beer at the three previous initiation ceremonies, except for the elders, but at the *Kayaet* every house which is feeding the initiates prepares six to ten pots of beer, about twenty-five to fifty gallons. This is distributed to the houses of various relatives and friends in the district. Everyone who wishes to partake contributes a *Kesiet* (three or four pounds) of *wimbe* grain to the house which has been feeding the *tarusiek*. A part of this is retained to make into beer later for the final coming forth.

At the time of the coming forth from the girls' initiation, some ceremonies are held which the older men may attend. In the case of boys the procedure is very similar; the main difference is in the clothes worn. The ceremonies are referred to as *Kerutyin*, the same word used to describe the evening ceremonies before initiation begins. The stem, *rut*, is used with reference to cattle or sheep returning home in the evening. On the evening before the *Chemerenik* are to discard the veil and come out as *Kipkilelik*, young women before marriage, the *Maywekap Boyot*, the beer of the elder, is held in one of the houses where the girls have lived for the last few months. Later at night in another such house is held the *Maywekap Chebiosok*, the beer of the (old) women, i.e. the mothers and initiation mothers; no men are present at this celebration.

For the final ceremony all the men of the *kokwet*, except the very young, meet outside the women's initiation house about four o'clock. At first only the elders are allowed to enter. The girls' *motiriot* and a few other women are present to attend to the beer; the girls remain in the adjoining *Kaptiriong*, or girls' enclosure. The *Boyotap Tumdo*, usually a very old and shaky man, who has either carried out himself or instructed others in all the ceremonies of the initiation, sits in the middle of the house. The guests sit in a double row all round the wall, with the women by the fire above. The elder then calls to three other senior men among the guests and together they prepare a gourd of milk and a *Komda* of beer, a ceremonial gourd which is never drunk from. After the gourds have been carefully cleansed, sprays of *seretiot* grass are put into their mouths so that the tips of the grass project. Two of the elders take a pick and axe, the handles of which have been wrapped round with *seretiot* grass, and with these they scratch the earth in a circle of about two feet diameter in the centre of the hut. In digging a hole to take the beer pot, the axe and pick are exchanged between the two old men four times. The chief elder sprays the hole with milk and beer as the digging proceeds. The hole is finally cleaned out with a hoe, the pot is set in position and turves of *seretiot*, carefully picked free from other grasses or extraneous matter, are packed round it. Finally a wreath of *senendet* is placed round the neck of the pot. A chant by the four old men then begins led by the chief elder. Outside in their enclosure the *Chemerenik* join in the chanting. As the froth rises over the lip of the pot after it has been filled to the brim, the four elders in turn suck it off. Finally the chief elder sprays all the guests with a mist of beer and chants a blessing.

The young men can now enter, beer is drunk in the normal way and conversation turns to ordinary topics for about an hour, i.e. till almost

sunset, when the younger people leave the house. When the latter are well away from the house and just as the sun sets, the still veiled *Chemerenik* come from the *Kaptiriong* to the door of the house. Here they are met by their *motiriot*, who remains inside the house while the girls remain without. The girls kneel to decorate the doorway with Sodom apples stuck in a plaster of cow dung. All in turn chant the *Kaandaet:* "I honour my father in initiation: I honour my mother in initiation and all my instructors in initiation; I honour all women."

The Coming Forth, *Ngetunotet*, is derived from the verb stem *nget* and the suffix 'u' and is associated with *Kangetunet*, the name by which a woman is known after childbirth. Dress forms an important part in the ceremonies. The women, after completing their rites during the night, spend part of the following morning removing the initiation dress (*Menekobosiek*) of the *Chemerenik* and dressing them in the new clothes (*Sirek*) the girls have been busy making during the past month. This garment consists of six to eight new goat or sheep skins, from which all the hair has been removed, softened, cut into quadrilaterals and sewn together to the correct shape. The joins are ornamented with rows of beads and the corners decorated with *Kiptelinik*, shield shaped tabs of leather covered with bead patterns. On the head they wear the *Nariet*, a cap of leather straps sewn with cowrie shells, fringed with iron chainlets and surmounted by a tuft of white goats beard. Round the waist is worn a girdle sewn with cowries, from which in the case of virgins—the majority—a deep-toned bell is suspended. The bell is tied during the ceremony to prevent it from ringing, but afterwards it is untied and rings with every movement made by the wearer. Every girl decides for herself when she will discard the bell. At the Opening of the Way (*Yatetap Oret*) ceremony, strict distinction is made between *Tegerisiek* and the other initiates (see p. 55). The latter wear as a skirt old *Sirek* loaned by other women, but the *Tegerisiek* wear their own *Sirek* as a skirt and cover themselves with a cloak of blue monkey skins (*Sambut*).

In the morning the men erect an archway (*Ormarechet*), five to six feet high with a horizontal lintel. Only certain trees may be used and the branches must be left on, so that the archway can be tied together without the use of lianas or ropes. Across the threshold two poles are let into the ground with a space between them, in which cow dung is placed. While this is being done the *Boyotap Tumdo* blesses the new clothes of the girls in their houses. By the time these activities are finished, it is probably mid-day, though traditionally the Opening of the Road should take place in the morning. The initiation mothers now lead their charges forth from the nearby houses, where they have been preparing themselves. A procession is formed which takes up position on the east side of the archway. The girls crouch down in a row on the ground and cover themselves completely, either with their *Sirek* or their cloaks of blue monkey skin. (The number of *Tegerisiek* wearing the *Sambut* is sometimes as many as one third of the total participants, and is an indication of the high rate of infant mortality.)

A man and a boy, an elder and a younger brother of the first *Kipkile-*

liot, now walk to the west side of the archway. The girl is raised up by her *motiriot* and led to the east side of the archway, where the two women kneel together. The brothers stand and each holds the upper end of a prepared pole, while the women hold the lower ends. Together they raise the poles and thump them four times in the cow dung on the archway threshold. During the thumping the two women sing *Yatwon oret, Kugonyun negetapkam!*, 'Open the way for me, my grandfather brother!' (The song has a pretty tune and takes longer to sing than the words indicate.) The first girl then rises and, keeping herself covered as much as possible, retires to the far end of the line of girls. Every girl in turn goes through this ceremony with her brothers. If there are no brothers their place is taken by cousins, but any young man or boy may open the road for a girl friend. In this case they and the girl become for all time brothers and sister and call one another *Pamwai*, the term used between real brothers and sisters. Since he is regarded as a true brother, such a proxy brother may not marry the girl for whom he had opened the way.

When all have gone through the ceremony, the *Chemerenik* rise and with their *motirenik* and initiation mothers form a procession, which goes round the nearby *mabwaita* four times. The *Boyotap Tumdo* stands by the *mabwaita* with a gourd of beer, in which a few sprays of *seretiot* grass have been placed. As the girls file past, he sips from the gourd and sprays them one by one with a fine mist of beer. They then go round to the east side of the archway, where every girl faces the various relations, men, women and children standing on the other side of the archway. With some of the relations a curious procedure takes place. The girl and her relation alternately dip their feet in the dung placed on the archway threshold. The girl smears dung from her feet on to those of her relative and then the relative smears the girl; this is repeated three or four times. As the girls finally pass through the archway, the officiating elder stands on the west of it and sprays every girl with a mist of beer. Some of the girls become so exhausted with the length of the proceedings and the heat of the cloaks covering their heads, that occasionally one of them faints. The *Boyotap Tumdo* is also worn out by the number of blessings he has to give, but he has more work on the morrow. Finally, amidst a din of laughter and chattering from the hundred or more women present, the girls form a line with their female relations and *motirenik*, while the male members of the family approach with horns full of butter. Every man puts on the head of every women related to him in any way—and they are many—a dab of butter. Quite a large lump, in which has been stuck a blade of *seretiot* grass, is placed on the girls' heads; at the end of the ceremony some of the girls have a pile of butter on the top of their heads. Fortunately by now it is evening and cool and the butter does not melt. At the same time every girl is presented by her brother, or substitute, with a *Sirtitiet*, a young sapling (with all its leaves and branches left on) about an inch thick at the butt end; the type of tree varies with the clan. A *Merenget*, which the girls wear after the ceremony next day, is usually hung in the branches, but some brothers omit this and present their

sisters with a sheep instead, after the haircutting ceremony four days later.

Meanwhile the men from miles around have congregated and have been holding a *Tiendo* (song, rather than dance) out of sight of the ceremonies over the brow of a hill. In the evening there is beer, but not so much as at the *Kayaet*. It is not for everybody but only for the *Siimotik*, the rejoicers, that is those who have been feeding the initiates, and the family friends. After the Opening of the Way, the *Chemerenik* become *Kipkelelik* and the boys become *Pogototik*, but this word is soon dropped in favour of *Kiptoik*, big calves. The *Kipkelelik* (the form *Chekilelik* is sometimes used) wear the same dress as married women, but all their garments are new (see p. 35).

The boys' coming forth procedure is almost the same as that described for the girls. The only significant difference is that the boys wear women's clothes and ornaments, supplied by their mothers, sisters, aunts and cousins: a *Sirek* beaded skirt; a long cloak of goat or sheep skins, the more ornamented with beading or chainlets the better; iron or brass *merengonik* necklaces; brass breast spirals (*taok*); *mwiywekap itik*; and the *nariet* headdress. They are met at the archway by an elder and a younger sister or, failing these, an adult and child female relation, or even a mere neighbour. Those who are not sisters become so by opening the way and are called and treated as *Pamwai* ever afterwards. Every boy is presented at the archway with a merenget necklace, which is hung in the branches of his *sirtitiet*. The elder brother, or paternal uncle, brings a new garment for the boy to the ceremony. When the boys and relations are anointed after the opening of the way, these garments are also oiled, but they cannot be worn as the women's clothes are not finally discarded until the ceremonial haircutting has taken place four days later.

The procedure in some ceremonies is not the same for all clans and some clans omit some ceremonies altogether. The 'Nandi' group of Kipsigis clans especially show differences, which may go back to the days when the two peoples were distinct *puriosiek* of the one tribe. The 'Nandi' clans do not perform the 'foot treading' ceremony at the Opening of the Road, and they do not pass through the archway but to one side of it. During initiation girls of the 'Nandi' clans wear a leather girdle instead of a plaited rope waistband. The 'Nandi' clans all omit the *Koretoetap Lakwet* and also the later ceremonies connected with marriage, *Kitebi Ngecheret* and *Sonaiek* (see p. 76).

Before the young men and women are fully fledged and able to marry, the *Tilętap Kirokwek*, 'The cutting of the walking sticks', ceremony has to be performed. It usually takes place on the morning after the coming forth. A herd of cattle (or sheep and goats, according to the district) is driven near the house where the ceremony is to take place. Carrying the *sirtitisiek*, with which they were presented the day before at the *Ormarechet*, the *Kipkelelik* and their *motirenik* form a procession, which goes round the herd four times. As the procession moves round, the girls touch the animals from time to time with their wands, while the *Boyotap Tumdo*, with his indispensable *Komda* gourd,

stands in the middle of the ring and asks blessings on the herds and flocks. The herd is then driven up to the *mabwaita* and the ceremony repeated with the *mabwaita* as the centre. The procession then marches off for some distance but not out of sight, and nobody follows. The girls kneel in a circle surrounding the herd and the elder. Every girl gathers in her hands a few blades of grass and, without plucking them, twists them into a rough rope and then untwists them again. During the twisting, the girls all sing a refrain, in which the word *Koyu* continually recurs. The root of this word always has the significance of 'surrounding' and, in this case, it probably indicates that the girls surround the herd in a fertility ceremony.

The girls are now told that they are grown up and, when cattle or sheep are given them by their husbands, they must learn to appreciate and care for these good things. They pray for fertility for themselves and for their flocks, herds and fields. The twisting of grass symbolises fertility so the grass used must be green and not dry; to twist dried grass would lead to a curse and to leave the grass twisted would have a bad influence on fertility. Finally they line up in front of the elder, who kneels at the *mabwaita*. The *kirokwek* are handed to him in turn and one by one he places them on a small block of wood and cuts the stick through just below the branches. The straight lower half is handed to the *Kipkeleliot*, who carries it (instead of *motolek*) until after her hair has been cut.

For some six months throughout the period of initiation, the hair is not cut. Included in this prohibition are the initiates, their parents, *motirenik* and those who feed them; also the brothers and sisters of the initiates, except married sisters because after marriage they cease to belong to their brother's clan. On the fourth day after the Opening of the Way, the hair is ceremonially cut. The usual word for 'cut' is *til*, but hair cutting is generally described as *Kenemu sumek* (*metit*), 'one takes off the hair (head)'. The ceremonial cutting carried out on this occasion is referred to as *Ketui sumek*, 'one breaks the hair', an unusual use of *tui* which is normally applied to the breaking of pots or stone. The haircutting takes place on the west of the *mabwaita*. A mixture of milk and salt lick (with other ingredients according to clan) is made in the hollow of a stone and the head rubbed with the thin paste. As usual the head is completely shaved, but the hair is not thrown away, as is normally done, but plastered on the *mabwaita* with the milk mixture.

APPENDIX 10: Initiation Songs.
11: The Chepketilet Song.

Chapter X

THE INTERVAL BETWEEN INITIATION AND MARRIAGE

AFTER the completion of the initiation period only a few weeks elapse before the girls are married. A few may have been betrothed before entering initiation. The betrothal and first marriage ceremony are the same and the performance of this ceremony does not mean that the pair live together at once. The decision to do so is within the discretion of the bride, who is advised by her mother. Sometimes as long a period as a year may elapse if the girl is very young. Boys do not marry at once after initiation as they usually have to acquire the necessary marriage cattle. In certain cases men may marry early. An only son, or the son of an old man, marries as soon as possible to ensure posterity for the inheritance, especially if his father has much stock to leave. If the father dies before any of his sons are married, the eldest son marries quickly for the same reason. A man who has only sisters older than himself may marry early, because the gift cattle of their marriages provide him with the cattle for his marriage.

After the *Kayaet* ceremony, one to three months before the coming forth, suitors for the young women are busy making representations to the girls' parents. The suitor's father, if still alive, pays the first visit to the girls' parents and, on this occasion, he carries a special stick of *Kuriot*, the same wood of which bows are made. Such a visit is called *Kibendi Koita*, 'one goes to the presentation (of cattle)'. As these cattle are called *Tugap Koita*, literally 'the cattle of giving away', there is no idea of purchase. On the first visit the father only mentions an ox, but often six sheep or goats are accepted instead of the ox. More important, the suitor's clan and age set are given to show that he is eligible from that point of view. After a few days the father makes a second visit to offer a *Tetap Ko*, 'a cow of indoors', which is not a cow at all but fourteen sheep and goats. He also describes his son's character, whether he is good or bad tempered, mean or generous and so on. If the girl's parents do not approve of the match, they now intimate the fact and tell the suitor's father to 'wage war elsewhere', *set luget*, which means literally to wage war elsewhere with the idea of obtaining cattle so that a man can marry. If there is no definite refusal, an intimate friend of the suitor from the same *kokwet* is sent to speak on the suitor's behalf. If the suitor is approved and likely to be accepted, the father is told to wait a few days and then return. On this third visit, a cow and heifer are added to the gift cattle.

On all these visits the father is often accompanied by his wife, whose ostensible part is to acquiesce in her husband's action, although in

practice the women have very great influence in the progress of the matchmaking. If the suitor's father is dead, or happens to be a tactless or unpleasant sort of man, his place may be taken by his brother, the paternal uncle of the suitor, *Kwanda* (the same word as for father). Failing a paternal uncle a friend and neighbour of the suitor, who knows him intimately, may make the proposal. The maternal uncle only occasionally undertakes the office, presumably because he is not of the same clan as the suitor and, for this reason, seldom plays an important part in Kipsigis ceremonies. Instead of the suitor's mother, a married and experienced sister may accompany the proposer. If a suitor is already married, his wife may also go to the presentation. She has a great deal to do with the choice of her *siet* ('co-wife') and often she is both instigator and chooser. When taking a second wife, a wise man marries a friend of his first wife. Probably this accounts to some extent for the success of polygamy and the relative lack of jealousy among the wives.

Among other things discussed between the families are the means left to the proposer, after he has handed over the presentation cattle, and whether he has the necessary stock to support a wife and family properly. The character of the suitor's mother is also considered, since it is usual, whenever possible, for a son to live near his mother's home, so that he can fulfil his filial duties. So searching is the enquiry into the character of a suitor and his nearest relations that all manner of fabricated accusations are brought against them. These accusations—of meanness, drunkenness, bad temper and even witchcraft—are refuted by the proposer's friends. Sometimes a marriage fails to take place because the suitor refuses to leave his mother, who may be much disliked by the girl's family. Such dislike is a serious impediment as the girl, on marriage, becomes part of her husband's clan and must live among his people. The relation created between the husband and his wife's mother, *Poger*, is not so important on this score, for a man and his mother-in-law scarcely speak to one another. They greet one another with the greatest respect and, when they have to discuss essential things, they converse at a distance. As they may not meet on a path, the woman takes to the bush when she sees her son-in-law coming in the distance. They avoid being in the same house together, but if that is necessary at a ceremony or gathering, they must be on opposite sides of the house. If the house is owned by someone not related to either of them, it does not matter on which side they sit so long as they are on opposite sides. In a house of the woman's relations, the man sits on the east (*Njor*) and the mother-in-law on the west (*Koima*). The positions are reversed in a house belonging to the son-in-law's relations.

Naturally a girl often has a sweetheart and would like him to marry her. If he does not meet with her parents' approval, or has not the necessary cattle, he may take the romantic but somewhat dangerous course of stealing his bride. The *Kipkelelek* after coming out are strictly watched to prevent a sweetheart, in collusion with the girl, from carrying out the preliminary marriage ceremony in a rough and ready manner (see p. 135). Cases have been known where a man has dug

below the house wall by the girl's sleeping place at night and tied on her wrist the *segutiet* grass. Anyone attempting this chanced receiving a spear thrust. Nowadays girls are often consulted on the choice of a husband. Usually the *motiriot*, who often becomes a close friend as well as being the initiation mother of the girl, tries to arrange for the girl to marry a suitable man of her choice. When a marriage is proposed to a girl, she may assert she has been 'tied' before going to initiation. This means that the girl cannot be freed from this irrevocable tie, except by divorce which is regarded an an extreme expedient. When a bride is so stolen, it is customary for the cattle to be handed over gradually over a period of years. It is difficult to assess whether marriages of choice are happier and last longer than those arranged by the elders. Ill treatment does occur; in some cases very serious ill treatment. In other cases the perversity of the woman or her disinclination to settle causes the rupture.

When the marriage has been finally arranged, it is sealed by a ceremonial visit of the future son-in-law to the house of the bride. This is called *Chutetap Njor* ('the entering of Njor') the eastern half of the house which is especially associated with relations by marriage, *sanik* or *konyitenik*. This visit may take place before the coming out, or it may be delayed even till after the marriage. In some clans the son-in-law personally enters the house *Njor*, in others he only enters the house of his wife's clan figuratively. Dressed in his best calf-skin cloak (often borrowed for the occasion) and accompanied by a *motiriot*, or best man, the suitor proceeds to the house of his prospective father-in-law, who meets him outside the house. An ox-skin for them to sit on is either laid by the *mabwaita* or on the east side of the fire within the house. The son-in-law is said to bring a sheep or goat, *ipe artet*, but he only states that he will send one. (*Ipe artet* means he carried one in his arms; if he actually brought one, the phrase would be *ketu artet*.) The father-in-law then anoints him on the forehead, breast and legs.

In most parts of Kipsigis the presentation cattle are made up in the following way: *eito* (ox); *tetap ko* (cow, ox or bull of the house); *iywagit* (cow); *roriat* (heifer). The animals handed over differ from those named and are, in the order listed above: six sheep or goats, exclusive of lambs; fourteen goats or sheep, exclusive of lambs; usually a cow with calf; a heifer in calf. In addition, the bride's mother is presented with a sheep or goat at the betrothal or first marriage ceremony, at the *Kechut Njor* and the *Suetap Tuga*.

The importance of the change from celibacy to the married state is marked by two ceremonies, known jointly as *Katumet*. They exhibit a quaint mixture of practical joke, crude symbolism and wise admonition. They are only practised by men and a few clans omit them. A man should be initiated into this ceremony before marriage, but in practice it often follows the first marriage ceremony, as it cannot take place until the marriage cattle have been completed. It must precede the great *Katunisiet* marriage ceremony, by which time a man may have one or more children, if deferred payment of the marriage cattle has been allowed. The first rite is called *Artetap Kirokwek*, the sheep (or goat) of

the walking sticks (or staves). The name evidently refers to the *kirokwek*, or better the *sirtilisiek*, which are conspicuous in the *Tiletap Kirokwek* ceremony (see p. 67) immediately following initiation. In this case no *kirokwek* are used, so the original connection between the two ceremonies is lost. The second rite is known as *Eytap Muget*, the ox of *Muget*—the meaning of which is not known. Women and children are strictly excluded from these ceremonies and, apart from the initiate of the occasion, only men may be present who have themselves been through the ceremony. A sheep or goat is sacrificed at the *mabwaita* and it is essential that the auspices from the entrails are satisfactory. The stomach is removed whole and then inflated, with the entrance and exit tied with *senendet* creeper. The stomach is hidden beneath a skin and taken into a house, where the initiate is seated on a stool surrounded by spectators. After the practical joke has been played on the initiate and he has been instructed in the attitude he should adopt towards the other sex, the old men ask a blessing on his future offspring and cattle. The initiate is told to cover his head with his garment and bend over the inflated stomach, which is then pierced with a *loinet* arrow, its quiver and with four sticks of Kerundut. The contents of the stomach (*Eyat*) are thus squirted over the man's face. Finally, his cheeks and temples are rubbed with the roots of a creeper containing a red dye, the same as that used in dyeing scabbards. If the man is known to be bad tempered, his face is rubbed so hard it is scarified and becomes so swollen and sore the following day that he is a laughing stock.

The second ceremony, which is usually performed a few days later, is similar but simpler. An ox or a very old cow, according to clan, is sacrified at the *mabwaita* and its stomach pierced in a similar way to the sheep or goat. Certain portions of the meat go to members of the initiate's *puriet* and certain portions to his clan. The *motiriot* in both ceremonies must be of the same *puriet* as the initiate and preferably also of the same clan. The fact that a practical joke is part of the ceremony does not mean that the ceremony is not taken seriously. The joke is used as a means of impressing on the initiate's mind the instruction he has been given on the serious nature of the marriage tie and on his relations with persons of the female sex. The two ceremonies are among the most secret in the Kipsigis calendar and together are known as *katumet*. This word means 'causing to bear' and is from the same root as *Tumdo*, the great initiation ceremony, with the causative prefix. The corresponding causative verb, *ituman*, is used sometimes by a man to his wife when the husband thinks he is being made a fool of. Literally, it means 'you are causing me to bear', that is 'making me ridiculous as a man'.

Chapter XI

MARRIAGE

THE first marriage ceremony is more in the nature of an unbreakable betrothal than a wedding, since the bridal pair often do not live together for months after the ceremony and there are several other ceremonies to be performed before the marriage is finally completed. It is, however, the most important of the ceremonies and is known as *Ratet*, the tying. It is carried out in an atmosphere of cheerful solemnity. The young couple endeavour to maintain a staid demeanour in the presence of their parents, but from time to time their habitual merriment breaks through their shyness and serious deportment. The ceremony, which may be held in any house, usually takes place after dark. The chief elder sits with a few of the bride and bridegroom's relations and friends, who sip beer through the ten feet tubes by the light of a large fire. On the fire a huge earthen pot is boiling, so that hot water is always ready to add to the beer. Although there is much laughter and joking, often at the expense of the bridegroom, the talk is subdued and loud voices would be unseemly. The chief elder is usually so old that he takes little part in the conversation.

The bride is expected when the moon is overhead, but is usually late. When the musical note of the bell she wears suspended from her cord girdle is heard, the younger people and those not related to the couple by blood or initiation, leave the house and go home. While waiting for the bride, the groom's *motiriot* (best man) with the help of his friends plaits strands of *segutiet* grass. Six strands are plaited in pairs and four plaits in all are made, two *Njor* and two *Koima*, one each for the groom and his *motiriot* and one each for the bride and her *motiriot*. When the bride's bell is heard, the groom goes outside with his *motiriot* and waits by the *mabwaita*, at the foot of which a fire has been lit. Though any married friend may be the *motiriot*, the bridegroom's elder brother is preferred. No unmarried man is eligible because a man cannot be a *motiriot* unless he has himself been initiated into the particular ceremony. The wife of the best man is *motiriot* to the bride, but when necessary any woman may perform this function, except the nearest relations of the bride or bridegroom, such as the people called mother and sister by the Kipsigis. The *motiriot* arrives with the bride, who is arrayed in her beaded *Sirek* (new skin skirt) and new *Koliget* of calf-skin. If she is a *Tegeriot* she wears a *Sambut* cloak of blue monkey skins. Her head, on which she still wears the *Nariet* (put on at the Opening of the Road) is exposed as little as possible. The groom and his *motiriot* are also decked out in their best clothes—long cloaks of glossy black calf-skins beaded

in white at the edges—which are often borrowed for the occasion.

The four chief actors walk in procession twice round the *mabwaita*, which is still decorated with many sacred plants placed there during the recent Coming Forth. Inside the house a large ox hide has been spread on the floor on the west side of the *teretap mai*, i.e. *Koima*. The elder holds in one hand four beer tubes of nearly equal length, after which all other *rogorosiek* are removed from the pot. The procession now enters the house, with all four participants carrying a small bunch of leaves of the sacred plants, spread out fanwise. The elder sits on the east of the *Teretap mai* and holds up the four beer tubes in the form of an arch. As the procession passes through the arch, the old man sprays every person on the right shoulder as he or she passes, and says *So* in token of a blessing. All the company repeat the word *So*, the meaning of which seems to be 'Amen', or 'so be it'. Two turns are made round the *Teretap mai* and at every turn two blessings are given. As every blessing is made the elder touches the bridal party lightly with the beer tubes. While this is going on, whispered instructions are given by the parents on the way clothes should be adjusted, bouquets carried and on deportment generally. The whole procedure is now repeated, the procession goes outside, makes a circuit of the *mabwaita* twice and then re-enters the house to receive again the fourfold blessings. After this the four participants sit on the ox-skin with their legs straight out before them, the bride on the left of the groom and the *motirenik* next to their respective charges.

The elder takes the four strands of *segutiet* grass and places them across the eight upturned palms of the bridal party. He then smears the grass with a little butter and sprays every palm with beer. The four are then instructed to knead the grass with their hands all touching. The long strands of grass are turned over end for end and this process is repeated four times. The groom, instructed by his *motiriot*, takes half the *segutiet* grass and ties it as a loose bracelet round the right wrist of his bride. She in turn ties the other half round the bridegroom's right wrist. The bride and groom thus tie one another in the same way. After the elder returns to his seat on the other side of the *Teretap mai*, he sips from the four beer tubes in turn and passes them to the *motiriot* on his left. The *motiriot* takes two tubes in each hand and, after sipping from all in turn, he passes them to the bridegroom. The tubes are passed round until all four have sipped from them when they are returned to the elder. The whole procedure is repeated four times.

The bride is then told to kneel without rising from her sitting position. Holding the four beer tubes in front of her, she takes two in each hand, spreads out her hands to their fullest extent and passes the tubes back to the elder, two on one side of the pot and two on the other. The bridegroom's father then makes a statement of the gift cattle in accordance with the agreement made some days before the betrothal. He tells his son to behave well and asks the girl's father to exhort his daughter to do likewise, so that she will bring no shame upon the clan she is entering. He especially stresses the need to remind her that she must entertain guests without stint, particularly her relations and

relations-in-law, so that her husband will not earn the stigma of meanness. Both fathers declare they cannot make definite promises as to the future behaviour of their children, but agree to meet again at the *Katunisiet*, or marriage proper, when all the gift cattle have been handed over. The bride and groom may offer no comment while this exhortation proceeds, however much they are pressed to do so.

The ceremony ends by the bridegroom's father making the peculiar sound expressed by the verb *Siim*, a high, clear, quavering note, *iriririri*. He follows this by saying: *Kongoi Tumdap Kiplegeno, Kongoi Tumdap Tamirun*. The bride's initiation mother and then the bride's own mother repeat the words on a still higher trill. The four principals then proceed outside and place on the roof their bouquets of sacred plants, which are burned at the foot of the *mabwaita* the following morning. The spoken words mean: 'Thanks to the ceremony (the initiation or possibly the marriage ceremony) of the *Kiplegenek* (the clan of the bridegroom); Thanks to the ceremony of *Tamirun* (the girl's name)'. The man's clan is mentioned but not his own name, while only the girl's name, which can never be spoken again by her husband. is used.

Kabwatereret is the name given to child betrothal, or the bestowal of girls before initiation. The ceremony is the same as that described above, but with less ceremonial detail. No bouquets of sacred plants are carried and the beer tubes are not held by the child and divided on each side of the beer pot. As child betrothal only occurs between friends as a rule, there is no formal visit to settle the presentation cattle. The prospective husband may offer one cow and six sheep or goats, but even this is sometimes waived by the girl's father, who merely takes the one sheep or goat which must be given for any form of betrothal. The couple do not consort together until after the girl comes forth from the initiation, and even then the girl and her mother have the final decision as to when married life shall begin.

The next ceremony, *Suetap Tuga* ('Viewing the cattle'), takes place after the marriage cattle have been presented and before the *Katunisiet*. It is an expensive feast as all the bride's relations have to be invited. It is held either at the house of the husband's father or that of the father's brother and, exceptionally at the house of a married brother of the husband. Immense quantities of food, milk and blood are required: 20 to 30 *keskesik* (baskets) of *kimoik* (porridge), about 100 to 200 lb., and 15 to 20 large gourds of milk, about 15 to 20 gallons. Unless the man is very rich, milk must be purchased by inviting neighbours to a beer party, *Maywekap Senendet*, in the same way as when milk is needed for a prospective mother. Four large pots of beer are required for the celebration, but some clans dispense with this. The women and children eat most of the food while the men eat sparingly. The men drink most of the beer for women are rarely heavy drinkers. The sheep and goats are brought up to the salt troughs (*Kamoing*) to be viewed by the bride's family. The cattle have already been seen at the cattle kraal, which might be miles away from the bridegroom's home. Either the same evening or the next morning according to clan, the

young wife is sent for and brought to the house of a neighbour who is not a member of her husband's clan. There she is anointed on the forehead with butter by her husband. In some clans an unrelated neighbour takes the place of the husband. If the wife's parental home is not too far away, the anointing takes place there.

Though the *Katunisiet* is not essential but only confirmatory, it is regarded an an important social occasion as it entails the entertainment of a very large number of guests for four days. The word is derived from the verb stem, *tun* 'marry', and it may once have been the chief marriage ceremony. The betrothal, or tying, is the ceremony that makes the marriage binding and the *Katunisiet* may be dispensed with by those who canot afford the expense, without the marriage being prejudiced in any way. It cannot be held until the whole of the marriage cattle have been handed over and found to be satisfactory. It may be postponed for many years until it can be performed together with the third ceremony, *Ewor*. There is a growing tendency to postpone it on account of the cost and the great amount of work it puts upon the women. The ceremony is almost exactly a repetition of the first marriage ceremony including a second tying of the *segutiet* bracelet. *Ewor(ga)*, *Ketebi ngecheret* and *Sonaiek*, the remaining ceremonies connected with marriage, take place in stages later in life. *Sonaiek* is held properly only in old age.

Marriage is prohibited within the clan, that is among people having the same totem. Even if a clan is subdivided under different clan names the totem remains the same and exogamy still applies, although other obligations such as reparation for homicide cease to operate. This means that marriage is impossible with all blood relations on the male side, however far removed. On the female side the rules are more complicated as the woman takes her husband's clan on marriage. A man may not marry a second time into the same clan. Though a man may marry into the clan of his brother's wife, he must not marry her sister or near cousin. A man may not marry a niece or cousin of any kind even though they are of different clan, e.g. father's sister's daughter, but he may marry his sister's husband's daughter by another wife. Although they are of different clans, the descendants of brother and sister may not intermarry until after the fourth generation. Though exchange marriages between two pairs of brothers and sisters are not prohibited, they are very much disliked for it is said experience shows that trouble invariably ensues: either one of the marriages will fail to produce children or one or more of the parties will die young. If one of the parties is a step-sister such a marriage is not frowned upon.

Besides clan exogamy and the above prohibitions with regard to blood relationship on the female side, marriage is also regulated by the age sets of the parties. A man may not marry the child of a man of his own age set, but he may marry the daughter of a man of senior or junior age sets. In a sense all the children of one age set are regarded as the children of every member of the age set. The words for 'father' and 'child' are often used to cover this extended relationship.

Although those who feed children during initiation take permanently

the position of father and mother (*pamongun* and *iyoo*), this relationship does not preclude marriage as it would if it were a blood relationship. A brother or sister of such people may marry the initiates, but the *pamongun* may not marry the children fed by his wife. This prohibition apparently only arises from eating food cooked in the same vessel. If a man has two wives, one of whom cooks for the initiates and the other for him, there is no restriction on the husband marrying the initiates fed from the separate vessels of the other wife.

When a man dies a brother assumes guardianship of the widow and may, if both so desire, raise children to the deceased husband. The guardian is called *Kipkondit* (from *Ikondit*, the war horn) and the relationship is described by the verb, *indye*, to continue. If there is more than one widow, a brother takes charge of one only; the elder brother takes the senior wife. If there are insufficient brothers eligible for guardianship, the brother of a co-wife (*siet*) may take charge of a widow not related to him by blood. If the deceased has no brother, or no grown up brother, sons of the paternal uncles take charge of the widows until the younger brothers are grown up. If there are several brothers and only one widow, it is not important which brother becomes *kipkondit* except under the following conditions. If two brothers went together to the initiation in the same *menjo*, neither may become *kipkondit* to the other's widow. If there is such disparity in the ages of the deceased and a younger brother so that they are members of different age sets, the younger brother may not become *kipkondit* to the widow as they are in almost a parent-child relationship. The same reasoning applies in the occasional cases where an elder brother has fed a younger during initiation and so assumed the relationship of father towards him. Children of such unions are the children of the deceased husband and not of the *kipkondit* and, on reaching maturity, they take the name of the former and not that of the real father. Among the Kipsigis there is no clear cut distinction between father and paternal uncle, except in the matter of inheritance.

Wilful infringement of the exogamy and other marriage restrictions is punished by the curse. Formal pronouncement may be omitted, except in very bad cases, as the crime brings its own curse automatically. Accidental infringements are not punished by the curse. In fact, infringement is so rare that opinion differs as to procedure. If a man marries a near blood relation, divorce takes place at once. If the relationship is distant the marriage may be allowed to stand and, if the union produces many satisfactory children, the wife's family and near relations may be made into a new clan. If a man marries the daughter of a member of his own age set divorce may take place, but as this is only likely to occur with the small intermediate groups at the end of a generation, it may not be considered a sufficient impediment to justify divorce and the elders may make a ruling in favour of the offending parties.

A woman, who has passed the age of child-bearing (*Kapsirwonin*) and who has no son, may marry a wife, whether her husband is alive or not. The expression used for such a union is *Katun chi toloch*, literally 'she marries someone for a *tolaita*'. The *tolaita* is the pole which

supports the upper storey of a house, hence the expression means 'she marries someone as a support for her house.' The same ceremonies and prohibitions apply to a *kapsirwonin* when she marries a girl, as if the elder woman were a man of her husband's clan and age set, since she adopted these on her marriage. As well as the prohibitions stemming from her relationship through marriage, she cannot marry a girl of her father's clan as she would be a blood relation. The *Kapsirwonin* is called husband (*monengotiot*) and the girl is called her wife. The latter does not call the *Kapsirwonin* 'husband' but addresses her as *Iyoo* (mother). The girl wife usually chooses the father of her children to be, but if possible he must be a man of the *kapsirwonin's* husband's clan. It is preferred that the wife lives with the old woman, or close by her, but sometimes she refuses if the woman is disagreeable or if the girl wife says she will not cook for a female. In such cases the girl usually goes to live with her de facto husband. It is not always easy to find a suitable man, as usually only a poor man who cannot afford a wife will consent, since the children of such a union are not his and have no duty towards him, though they may call him father. They do not take his name nor inherit from him and, unless he happens to be of the appropriate clan, his spirit cannot come to the descendants of the marriage. The children take the name of the *kapsirwonin's* husband, inherit their house's share of his property and may receive the spirits of his family. If the *kapsirwonin's* husband is living he supplies the presentation cattle for the marriage; if the woman has a daughter her marriage cattle may be used for this purpose. If the husband is dead, the widow's share of his cattle may be used to present to the girl wife's parents. To the Kipsigis mind these marriages between women have many advantages: an old woman without a son has no protector and no one to work for her in old age or sickness; without a son she has no one to inherit her husband's property or to ensure the reincarnation of his spirit. So strongly do these considerations weigh that a person who dies without children (*Chemukta*) is said to *me koninda*, 'die to eternity'.

A widow cannot be married a second time. The ceremony of tying with the *segutiet* bracelet can only be performed once. The traditional procedure is for a widow to live with a *kipkondit* and to raise up children to her deceased husband. Occasionally a widow finds a man to live with in mutual help and support. The expression for this relationship, *Paege*, 'they feed one another' refers to the fact that the woman keeps house and the man performs for her all the work traditionally done by men. As children from such unions belong to the deceased husband's clan and inherit from him, it is usually only a man who cannot afford to marry who will live with a widow (or a runaway wife). Often such a relationship persists for the rest of the parties' lives until it is almost forgotten that they are not married. In fact it is a recognised status and carries no stigma if the relationship is permanent and there are mitigating circumstances. Occasionally in the same way a widower will live with a widow out of affection rather than marry again if he already has children.

Divorce is not commonly resorted to. The chief reasons for divorce are: accidental marriage within the prohibited degrees of relationship or generation; complete incompatibility of husband and wife leading to ill treatment by the husband. The object of divorce is to allow the woman to marry again. The wife always takes the children since the basis of divorce is the return of the marriage cattle. After a divorce the children belong to the mother, not the father, as the mother with her children returns to her father's clan again. Her son, therefore, cannot obtain cattle for his marriage from his father but has to earn them in war. Although the son does not inherit any of his father's property, he does inherit the marriage cattle of his sisters, which he may use for his own marriage. Although the maternal uncle (*mamet*) usually helps the divorced woman by lending sheep and goats and cattle for the milk supply, his sister's children in no way belong to him or inherit from him. It is very rare for a divorced woman not to be married again soon after the divorce ceremony; in this case the children belong to, and inherit from, the step-father. If a divorced woman has a bad character, a man may live with her for a year or so and if finally she is found to be satisfactory, he will pay the marriage cattle, whereupon the children of the first marriage become his children. Before a divorce can take place there must be a meeting of all the men of the *kokwet*. The relations of the parties attend but it is said that the *kokwet* is competent to decree a divorce alone. The small ceremony, by which each party signifies consent to the divorce, consists in the husband and wife greeting each other by their child names (*kainutik ap musarek*) and the terms of greeting used towards boys and girls, *Subai* and *Takwenya*. The ceremony is called *Kiilge* from the concluding rite in which each party anoints the other on the forehead with butter. (The use of child names in divorce probably accounts for the extreme objection to the use of these names between adult men and women. Similarly *Subai* cannot be said to a grown man except by a very old man. Although *Takwenya* may be said to any woman whom a man may not marry, it is commonly reserved for blood relations; although it is correct, girls dislike men to use this term, as it indicates that the men have no desire to marry them.)

Even without ceremonial divorce, a woman's clan may allow her to leave her husband for persistent cruelty or neglect. The *kokwet*, together with the clan, decides whether there is sufficient justification for this step to be taken. The *kokwet* is in an excellent position to judge the issue as it consists of the neighbours of the quarrelling parties. If the separation is approved, the woman may return home to her relations, who are responsible for her support. More usually, she will find a man to live with in an irregular relationship similar to that often formed by widows (see p. 78). Such a relationship is also called *Paetap ge* and can never become a legal marriage, as the tying with *segutiet* cannot be performed again. If a woman runs away with another *Kipsigisindet*, the matter can usually be arranged between the families. If the husband is shown not to be at fault, the woman is compelled to return. If the husband is at fault the woman is allowed to live at her

parental home. If she finds another man to live with, he has no right to her children, unless he is willing to find the marriage cattle and to arrange for a divorce for the woman.

Kipsigis thinking on their traditional practice of polygamy is based on three main premises: marriage is an institution for the procreation of children and the desire to have offspring is very strong among all Kipsigis of both sexes; the need, under their conditions of life, for every woman to have a male help and protector; and the general excess of females over males, which is accentuated among a people whose men folk were constantly at war. It is doubtful whether the fact that older men have more than one wife debars the younger men from marriage, as there never seems to be a shortage of marriageable girls, but rather too few young men with the necessary property for them to marry even when the marriage cattle are handed over in instalments. In families in which boys predominate, the sons have to earn their marriage cattle and consequently cannot get married when they are young. As every girl must be married at once after initiation, polygamy is necessary to take up the surplus girls who would otherwise be left spinsters—a status unthinkable to the women themselves whose chief desire is to have children.

Closely bound up with the question of polygamy is that of the relative position of plural wives. It is age alone which gives authority or entails respect among wives married to the same man. As every wife has her own house, there is no question of the senior wife making the others work for her. The senior wife or wives instruct the younger ones in their duties, just as older people always instruct the younger. The younger wives also help the elder women in the same way as children help their elders. If the senior wife is very much older than a younger wife, the latter may call her mother, otherwise she will address her by some *salaniat* as is the normal custom between all women. If the senior wife happens to be an unpleasant woman, the younger will not obey or help her and is under no obligation to do so. When she is deserving of respect, she is accorded it in the same degree as if she were the *Koregetap Yugoy*, or husband's mother. Although every wife has her own field, they all help one another in agricultural work, unless they have quarrelled. Similarly all the wives work together in the preparation of beer and the provision of food for ceremonies. There is, in fact, no difference between senior and junior wives except that which is due to age. Men, women and children all give respect and help to their seniors. Seniority always gives the right to give orders but personality alone secures obedience to them. The greater the disparity of age, especially if it stretches beyond a generation, the greater the respect accorded by the younger to the elder in all walks of life.

Because of the misconception that has arisen from the use of the unfortunate expression 'bride price', there is a tendency to think that African women are mere chattels, oppressed and ill-treated and kept in a very inferior position by their unfeeling masters. Among the Kipsigis the transactions connected with marriage are not looked upon as

a purchase in any respect. The two words for 'marry', *ketun* and *kigesa* (intransitive) and the two expressions for the transfer of the marriage cattle, *kegoita tuga* and *keganda tuga* have no connection with buying. *Kegoita tuga* means 'one gives away cattle' and *Kegoita* is the ordinary word used for 'make a present of'. Although when a Kipsigis wishes to marry he has to consider whether he is well enough off to do so, he does not think he is buying a wife. He knows that he must not only possess sufficient cattle for the presentation, but must also satisfy his prospective father-in-law that he has enough property besides for the support of his wife and probable children.

If a man has a daughter but no sons, the presentation cattle received when the daughter marries revert to the daughter in trust for her children, that is the cattle return to the donor clan. Even if the man has sons by another wife, the presentation cattle do not go to them but still revert to the daughter for her children. If these cattle were really considered to be the property of the girl's father, they would be inherited by his sons. This seems to be conclusive evidence that the presentation cattle are not a purchase price, but that they are at least partly for the benefit of the woman and her children, both directly when they revert to her in trust for her children and indirectly as a guarantee that she will be properly treated by her husband. Presentation cattle are also probably regarded as compensation for the life taken from the bride's clan, in accordance with the custom which requires that compensation must be paid when a life is lost, even though accidentally, through the action of a person outside the clan. The normal compensation for death is nine head of cattle whereas the presentation cattle are equivalent to only four head. This difference is probably due to the fact that the daughter is considered to be not entirely lost to her family, to whom she still has duties; her husband, on his part, also assumes obligations towards his wife's family, the specially honoured *konyitenik*.

The presentation cattle are not, in fact, the essential feature of Kipsigis marriage, as a man may legally marry a girl (with her consent but without that of her family) by carrying out the first marriage ceremony, *Ratet ok segutiet*. Such a marriage is binding without any cattle being given, though it is usual for the husband to make the presentation later, as it is extremely important under the Kipsigis social system that he be reconciled to his wife's family and clan, who are his *konyitenik*, or people especially to be respected. Even when a woman proves barren, the husband will not divorce her and seek the return of his cattle, unless she runs away and persists in returning to her parental home. If the wife has borne him children and subsequently runs away, the husband can claim no compensation by the return of the *tugap koita*, since the children (and any children she bears after running away) remain his. Should she demand a divorce on the grounds of persistent cruelty or neglect, the husband relinquishes the children who no longer inherit from him but from a subsequent step-father. (Should there be no step-father, the children cannot legally inherit from the wife's family, but they are usually given some

small inheritance voluntarily.) The *tugap koita* are not the property of the wife's father or uncle and may not be sold or used by them as presentation cattle. They may be sold by no one and can only be used by the wife's brothers as *tugap koita* when they marry; if they are not so used, they become entailed in the family for ever, as the inheritance of the children of the wife's brothers. It is, therefore, the ceremony of the tying with the *segutiet* bracelet which constitutes a legally binding marriage, and determines that the children of the union belong to the husband and inherit the spirits of his family and his property. All other transactions and ceremonies are subsidiary to the *ratet*, and are expressions of that *tegisto*, or respect which must be accorded to the wife's family.

APPENDIX 12: A Runaway Marriage.

Chapter XII

HOUSES, HOUSE BUILDING AND MISCELLANEOUS CUSTOMS

BETWEEN the betrothal and the time when the newly wedded pair begin to live together, the husband is occupied in building a house. Sometimes there may be a recently vacated house in a suitable position near the husband's family. At the time of harvest or the cultivation of new fields, when everybody is fully occupied, such a house would be made use of until there is more leisure to build a new one. The responsibility of building a house rests with the husband, but help from both relations and the *kokwet* may be —and usually is—called upon. Brothers or the paternal uncle are responsible for building a house for a widow, and sons or nephews in the case of an old man or woman. Relations give such help without remuneration, but they are hospitably entertained while the work is in progress. If all the members of the *kokwet* help, beer is prepared for them on completion of the house. If only a few members help, they are well fed on the days they work and milk is procured specially for them. Thatching, as an expert art, is specially remunerated. A sheep or goat is killed and part of the meat is eaten together with the family; when the thatchers go home they are each given a hind leg to take with them. Sometimes two gourds of milk are given to each man instead.

When a house is being built, there are certain practical considerations and matters of religious or superstitious importance to be taken into account. Nearly all Kipsigis country is hilly with streams flowing through deep valleys. The people do not care to live near the streams at the bottom of the valleys, partly on account of the coldness of such situations (caused by the cold night air draining from the hills to the valley bottoms), but also probably on account of the danger of such positions during raids. Proximity to water is essential, for the carriage of four or five gallon earthenware jars to the house is a burdensome daily duty, and for a large beer party a dozen such pots may be required in one evening. The site of choice is a position some way up the hillside rather than on the top. Such a position, if well chosen, has the further advantage of being more sheltered from the weather. For the sake of drainage, in the short heavy downpours of rain characteristic of the district, a sloping site is necessary. Such a relatively flat yet sufficiently sloping place on a valley side is called an *Atebwet*.

The door should face down the slope so that water cannot run into the house; it should not face the prevailing wind and rain, which is usually from the east; the satisfactory burning of the fire depends partly

on these two points. The door should not face due east or west, as the rising and setting sun must not shine on the fire. When a man moves to a new district, he likes to face his old home. Since the general tendency in recent times has been to migrate slowly northwards, doors in Northern Kipsigis often face south. This northward migration is said to be the result of a disposition to move towards their country of origin. The practical considerations determining that doors face south, south west, north or north west are reinforced by an important religious requirement. Every house consists of two halves: *Njor*, the eastern and *Koima*, the western half, which play an important part in ceremonies and social etiquette. If a house were to face east or west, the line from the door through the fire in the centre could not divide the house into eastern and western halves. In the cleared open space outside the house is built the *mabwaita*, which must be on the east of the door but not in front of it. Some clans also have in the east wall a hidden ceremonial door, *Kurgap san* (see p. 53).

Houses are always round. A married man's house is usually from 20 to 30 feet in diameter, with 300 to 600 sq. ft. of floor space. The attic floor, which also forms the ceiling of the house, is only about four feet from the ground and the doorway is only about three feet high. The internal arrangement of a hut varies to some extent, but there are some constant features. The floor slopes gently up from the door to facilitate cleaning (*nguet*) and sweeping (*Kapuket*). All decent houses are cleaned before 9 a.m. with a stiff hide scraper. A bunch of bracken or grass is used to sweep them out again about mid-day and in the evening. The position of the door relative to the slope of the floor helps to make a good draught for the fire and to keep the house free from smoke. There is no chimney and the smoke oozes out through the thatch. The fireplace is a rectangular trough formed of flat stones set up on edge and buried deeply in the ground, so that heavy pots can be set firmly on them. It is situated a few feet above the centre of the house, a little further from the door than from any other part of the wall. The hot air rising from the fire draws a current of air from the door, so that a well built house keeps surprisingly free from smoke below the level of the ceiling.

The bed place is opposite the door and above the fireplace. The head of the bed is formed by the wall and the sides are usually made of plastered wickerwork. The *Ngeromberut* pole is placed across the foot of the bed, beyond which relations by marriage and people of a different age set from the house owner may not go. The child bed (*Itogutap Lakwa*) is a space on the east of the fire usually defined by a ridge of dung plaster. Although it is normally used by women and children, there is no restriction on its use by men, apart from the owner of the house. The reason for this prohibition is that his wife nurses the babies there, so that it is unclean owing to the *Kerekap lakwet*.

The *Kitarut* (cupboard) is built against the wall to hold all kinds of household utensils and property. A special plastered wicker receptacle, called the *Kapsoton*, is built against the wall to hold the milk gourds. There are also pouches fixed on the wall for smaller articles. Spears, shields and rolls of skins are hung against the wall, also the long bamboo

container for beer tubes, *Mesengeswet*. Bows, arrows, knives, clubs, etc. are kept in the space between the attic floor and the main horizontal supports.

The attic covers the whole area of the house and is entered by a square hole in the fireplace half of the house. It is used for storing grain and any other property. As it is very hot and smoky, things stored there are disinfected by the smoke and keep well. A visitor who may not sleep in the bedplace, or a man who feels an incipient cold or fever, may occasionally sleep in the attic.

A few Kipsigis divide the house by a partition, so that the sheep may be confined to one half of the house. This method was not liked in the old days, because it was said to make it easier for raiding Masai to steal the animals. The usual arrangement is to tether the more obstreperous goats to pegs round the base of the wall, while the remainder sleep where they like out of the way of the human occupants. Although it entails a lot of work in scraping out the house every morning, this practice of living with the small stock has some advantages, as it keeps the floor hard and free from dust and consequently free from fleas and jiggers. No Kipsigis will live in a house without sheep and a man, who through poverty or any other reason has no sheep of his own, will borrow some to keep his house free from fleas. Fleas have increased with the introduction of chickens.

The *sigroinek*, or houses for the unmarried men, are usually much smaller and contain nothing but beds built all round the wall and a few stones in the centre for a fireplace. There is no attic. Children of both sexes sleep in these houses, where two or three often sleep on one bed or ox-skin. A child is not forced to sleep in the *sigroinet* and if he (or she) finds the company there undesirable, he can move to the home of his parents or other relations. A husband often moves into the *sigroinet* during the latter part of his wife's pregnancy. The *sigroinek* are used by several neighbours and the number of people sleeping in one may be as many as twelve or more.

Every married woman has a separate house of her own, that is every adult woman since all adult women are or have been married, except in the very rare case of a girl who has failed to go through initiation. As a hut consists of only one room, it is considered improper for a woman not to have a house to herself. A man may be committed to build a house not only for every wife, but for his mother, widowed aunt or sister, his deceased brother's wife and so on. When visiting, or when a separate dwelling is not available, two or more women may live together temporarily in the same house whatever their relationship or generation. A man may not live even temporarily in the house of a woman of his own clan, of his wife's natal clan, or of his sister's husband's clan.

The work of building a house is apportioned between men and women: Men clear the site; cut all poles and sticks—(about 800 large and small)—in the forest and bush; cut and carry all lianas and tying material; do the building and thatching; dig out the *piut*, or circle of hard earth round the house. Women carry the poles and sticks; cut and

carry the thatching grass; pluck and carry the thatching leaves (children help with this). Girls plaster the house when the building is finished. Men often help with carrying the poles and usually carry the creepers.

When the site has been chosen and cleared, the seven feet long uprights (*Mugenik*), are sharpened at both ends and thrust lightly into the ground about a foot apart to form a ring about 20 to 30 feet in diameter. When this ring has been adjusted as nearly as possible to a circle, the posts are planted very firmly into the ground by thumping the pole continually in the same spot. If the weather is dry or the ground hard, water or cow dung is added to the hole to facilitate the process. They are driven into the ground some 18 inches and have to be very firm, as they have to bear not only the weight of the roof but also that of the attic when full of grain. The posts are from three to five inches thick and are usually cut from one of the trees, which do not rot in the ground and are not attacked by white ants. In order of merit, these are: Cedar, which is rarely available; *Saruweriet*, a yellow wood with a beautiful grain, which grows near the rivers in the forest at 6,500 to 8,000 feet; *Chebitet*, red acacia thorn; *Rerendet*, a rubber bearing tree with laurel like leaves, white flowers and kidney shaped fruit. The circle of uprights is now bound firmly by three pairs of lianas (*Mirotik*), one on the inside and one on the outside of the main posts. The three rings so formed are spaced equally, one at the top of the wall, one intermediate and one at the bottom. The creepers are about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter and are held in position by securing them at frequent intervals with thinner creepers (*Porunik*).

Long thin rafters (*Chagaiik*) are stood up between the lianas, in the space left between the rings encircling the uprights. Some are driven firmly into the ground, others merely wedge themselves between two rows of lianas and become firm when they are pulled over to the apex of the house. The longer rafters are put in first and bent over to the apex, around which two liana rings, about two feet in diameter, are placed to form a centre. One ring is above the rafters and the other below, so that when tied together they strain the rafters firmly to the supporting wall. When the first liana ring is full and the rafters all touch one another within it, a similar double ring of lianas is made three or four feet below the first. The shorter rafters and the first long ones are secured to this ring, until the rafters fill it. A third (and in the larger houses a fourth) ring (*Kimnyorubait*) is then made, which in turn is filled with shorter rafters. The greater the distance from the apex the more rafters are needed to cover the wall surface. The eaves (*Keterut*) are now formed by hooking through the rafters and round the sharp ends of the uprights, forked wish-bone shaped sticks (*Mololunik*), with prongs two feet long. These are not tied as they easily wedge themselves so that the prongs stick out at the desired angle. The inside ends press upwards against the rafters, so that the eaves cannot be depressed by the weight of the thatch.

The lowest ring of lianas is broken to form the two feet wide doorway, (*Kurgat*). The lintel is formed by tying thin creepers round and round the second ring of lianas to form a flat place above the doorway. This

is called *Marugut*, possibly because children often keep a little food there which has been left over. The verb *rugut* (literally 'sleep mouth') means 'go hungry', 'go to bed hungry'; *ma* is the negative prefix. The idea is that a child keeps a little food on the lintel, so that he need not go hungry. Two extra posts (*Tugatukiet*) are fixed near the uprights and tied to them at the top, one on each side of the doorway, so that a huge slab of wood (*Musareita*), often from the flute of a tree trunk, can be slipped in between them from the inside to close the doorway.

The attic (*Tabot*) is now formed by very long straight poles (*Pambanik*), which completely span the house when placed parallel to the line from the door to the fireplace. These are laid about two feet apart and rest between the tops of the wall uprights. In all larger houses one or two stout poles (*Pambanyatap tilet*) are placed beneath and at right angles to the *Pambanik*. These supporting poles are carried by six inch forked uprights (*Tolaita*), one to four in number. The floor of the attic is made by two inch poles (*Ruayuwek*) tied at right angles to the *Pambanik* and spaced at six inch intervals. Across these again are laid thin very straight sticks (*Teteywek*) laced together so that they touch one another. A square hole is left as an entrance to the attic (*Kutip tabot*).

Before thatching begins a six feet stick with a sharpened top is tied in a vertical position at the apex of the roof. In order to shape the slope of the roof and to save thatching grass, which in many districts has to be carried long distances, large soft leaves (*Sogek*) of the *Tebengwet* bush are first placed in a layer on the roof. The long thatching grass is then laid neatly over the leaves but is not tied. Thatching is started at the eaves and, if well done, makes a perfectly even surface of uniform slope, which does not leak in the heaviest rains and will last five years. A thick layer of leaves is placed round the apex stick (*Kimonjogut*), to which the top layer of thatching grass is bound. Finally over the apex stick is placed a potsherd (*Rokiet*), the top half of a broken pot including the neck.

A short distance from the house there is usually a *Choget*, or grain store, which is also used for storing firewood and other goods. The form and use of the *Choget* varies in different districts. Sometimes it is a small hut built in the style of a dwelling house but with less care, with the rafter ends forming the eaves instead of the special construction described above. In other districts, the grain is stored only in an upper storey and the lower part of the hut is left entirely open. The *Mabwaita*, which is only built at a married man's house, stands four or five yards from the house in the cleared open space, *piut*, and is always on the east. Every morning the house floor is scraped and the sheep and goat droppings thrown on to the dung heap situated some ten yards from the house. The careful housewife picks out any extraneous matter, such as chips of wood, bones, etc., for not only is the manure used on the vegetable garden, but also for plastering the house walls. Cow dung is also used in most of the important ceremonies, when it takes on a 'sacred' significance (from its association with stock) which is presumably considered not to be inconsistent with its daily use in household matters.

Children who die before cutting their teeth and certain old men are buried in the dung heap (see p. 104). An unclean person may not approach the dung heap or the vegetable garden (see p. 29).

When the owner of a house dies certain parts of it are removed, but his wife and young children may continue to occupy it. The price of a new house is a young ram or he-goat, but the thatching has to be done by the purchaser. When the main poles of an old house are still fit for use again, an axe, hoe, or some wire ornaments are the usual purchase price.

When a house is finished, but before it is inhabited, half dry logs are burnt in it to smoke the leaves under the thatch while they are still green to prevent them from rotting. This fire may be lit by anyone in the usual way by taking fire from another house. But for the first four days another fire is made both morning and evening by the house owner with fire sticks (*piunet*). The fire thus made is added to the fire already lit and the usual sacred plants are then burnt on it. During this period of four days no fire may be taken from the house (so that the usual custom of supplying neighbours with fire when a fire goes out cannot be observed); no ceremony may take place; and no beer can be drunk, as there are no firestones on which to boil water. On the fourth day at sunrise the woman of the house sprinkles wood ash from the fire all round the house under the eaves. The house is now ready to be lived in without any further restrictions. This is described by the words, *Kengeetu kot*. *Ngeetu* is the same word as that used to describe the coming forth of men and women from the initiation and that given to a woman four days after she has borne a child. Finally firestones are put in and the bed place and other accessories are built.

Under no circumstances may a house be burnt. If for any reason a house becomes unwanted or uninhabitable, it may either be left standing (in which case it is called a *Kipkuberet*), or it may be pulled to pieces so that the still serviceable parts may be used in building a new house. A *Menjet*, or boys' initiation house, may not be pulled down, but the thatch may be removed and used again. The room partitioned off in a house for girls during initiation (*Somot*) may not be pulled down, even if the rest of the house is demolished, and the sticks from the partition may not be used for firewood. A house is never burnt for punishment or revenge. In cases of witchcraft and theft, which are not serious enough to warrant the death penalty, the culprit's house may be pulled to pieces by the avenging crowd (*Njoget*), but no on account may it be burned down. If a house is burnt by accident, the owner does not leave the district but builds another house close by.

When the Kipsigis move house they are influenced by the following considerations: desire to be near other relations and friends; desire for better grazing or for other conditions thought to be better elsewhere; continual sickness of those living in the house, especially if this results in the death of several small children; sickness among stock; the appearance of mushrooms or toadstools in the house; the death of a wild animal in the house, especially a dog; a dog climbing on to the roof of the house.

The killing of animals in a house is avoided. If a snake has to be killed in a house, it must be removed through a hole in the wall and not by the door. Rats and mice may be killed in a house, and a spider if it spins a web upon beer tubes when in use. It is considered unlucky if a bird enters a house and a sheep or goat has to be sacrificed. This is connected with unnatural behaviour (*Sogornotet*, see p. 26), as the bird's action indicates it might have a spirit embodied in it. A person must never leave a house backwards. Even if a man is on the point of entering, he must not back out but enter completely and turn round before going out. This may be from fear of danger from without or for some forgotten superstitious reason. Voices should not be raised loudly within doors, especially in anger and even in song. Whistling in the house is considered ill-mannered, but is not a serious offence.

Great care is taken both inside and outside houses to avoid stepping over certain objects: a dead or sick animal; a human being, dead or alive (this applies especially to stepping over the legs of a person who is sitting or lying down); a fire; a snake; any kind of food; and beer tubes. Although it is particularly objectionable for a dog to step over a beer tube, sheep and goats may pass over or under the tubes.

When hunting certain animals, especially the more dangerous ones, there is a curious aversion to saying their names. The same convention is observed towards the legendary *Chemosit* and also towards some foreign witchdoctors. It is similar to the custom in daily life regarding personal names. A man does not use his wife's given names and a woman may not use her husband's name or even his father's name. It is usually only the father (and occasionally the mother) who uses his son's given names. Though men do not use women's given names, women always use them among themselves. Nicknames are used without any restriction, but when a man refers to his mother-in-law (*Poger*) he must use no name of any kind. If a man chokes over food or beer, his *Kainetap Musarek* must be used at once if anyone present knows it. In the case of dangerous animals a nickname is used in place of the ordinary name presumably to avert danger. When a person is suffering from anthrax, the usual term for this disease is not used for a similar reason. The name for waterbuck is not said near stock or when goats are in the house for some reason connected with the coarse grey hair of these animals. The word used in this case is *Chemokemwa*, 'which one does not say'. Among the animals which are not mentioned by name are elephants, rhinoceroses, buffaloes, leopards, hyenas, and ratels. The Kipsigis do not now believe these animals can understand human speech, but probably such a belief is the origin of the custom. Handling or walking through bracken often results in splinters penetrating the hand or foot. If this happens bracken must not be mentioned or the thorn will break in the wound, fail to come out and fester. To prevent this the ordinary word for thorn and needle, *Katet*, must be used. After extraction the splinter is kept in case the wound should fester. If the wound is in the foot the splinter is wrapped in the leaves of the *Kerundut*, one of the sacred plants used at initiation and other festivals. This is supposed to prevent swelling of the groin glands, which is so common after foot

wounds.

There are indications that at some time in the past rivers were regarded as 'sacred', though this feeling no longer persists. A river plays an important part in the *Piretap Peek* ceremony (see p. 24); during war a river was sanctuary; if a river were in flood when warriors returned with cattle from a raid, they prayed to the river to go down and threw sacred *seretiot* grass into it; (the common girls' *salaniat* name, *Tapsabi*, commemorates this with its derivation from *sa* (pray) and *peek* (water); when a man crosses a river with a trough for feeding salt to stock, *seretiot* grass must be placed in it (this does not apply to the other *moinget*, or beehive); when a Kipsigis crosses a river with milk gourds, he dips the gourds in the water.

Three phrases are used in connection with the extraction of teeth; when second teeth are pulled *Kepal Kelep*, 'one digs the teeth', is said and they may be thrown anywhere in the bush. When children's milk teeth come out, *Keutia Lakwet* is said and the tooth is mixed with ashes from the fire and a little sheep or goat dung and thrown away to the east. A little prayer is said: *Oynon keldet nemurwon, Sikonon nelel, Saluoten chego ap moe*, 'Here is the dirty tooth, so that you give me a new one, so that I may drink from time to time the milk of calves' (a reference to a delicacy prepared from colostrum, with which no other food may be eaten). The ceremonial extraction of teeth has been described under childhood ceremonies (see p. 52); in this case the teeth are placed in the *seretiot* at the foot of the *mabwaita*. In the traditional style of hairdressing, men used to allow their hair to grow as long as possible, so that it could be combed back and twisted into little strings lengthened by the addition of wool or other material. The whole was then gathered into a club hanging down the back, with a fringe over the forehead. When cut, the hair may be thrown away anywhere, but when cut ceremonially it is placed at the *mabwaita* (see p. 68). The complete absence of hair on the body in the case of women is considered a sign of weakness or infertility and may even be a bar to marriage.

CHAPTER XIII

AGRICULTURE

ONCE a newly wedded couple have built or acquired a house and brought some sheep and goats from the husband's former home, a field has to be made for the production of sufficient grain for the following year. Any cattle that remain after payment of the marriage cattle usually remain in their former kraal for some time after the couple have moved.

For the first year after marriage those relatives who live within a reasonable distance contribute a certain amount of grain and the balance—even the whole when there are no nearby relatives—is supplied by the kokwet. Every house in the neighbourhood in which the newly married couple have decided to live, usually supplies one large basket of unthreshed grain equivalent to about 12 to 16 lbs. of threshed grain. This initial assistance is necessary because land can only be prepared in the dry season. Though in many parts of Kipsigis country the dry season is not severe or prolonged, it lasts sufficiently long to meet the needs of their method of cultivation. If there is much rain in the dry season (as sometimes happens in the higher districts) so that the turves cannot be burnt, the year is called *Tuberet* and marks a period from which time is counted. The dry season begins about the end of November. In the southern and western districts seed is sown early, at the end of February or the beginning of March, not so much because the rains are earlier there but because in these districts rain in June to September is liable to be insufficient for the young growing crop. In the higher lands to the east and north, the rains are fairly reliable during these months and the crops can be reaped in the drier months of October and November. Sowing in these districts takes place from April to June and even after the heaviest rain is over.

Traditionally the only field crop was *Wimbi*, a small millet standing from one to two feet high. It is still the most important crop and is likely to remain so for some time, in spite of its being so uneconomical and so laborious to work. Maize was introduced by the Government about 1912 but took a long time to become popular. *Wimbi* is easily ground by hand between special flat stones, but as there were no mills with which to grind maize, this crop was useless to the Kipsigis as a food and could only be sold to Indian traders whose shops were often very far away from the homesteads. There are now a number of small mills in those districts where the streams are large enough to drive them. Maize, wheat and beans are all subject to attack by weevils, so that it is difficult to keep these foods for longer than six months.

Wimbi is resistant to weevil and keeps in good condition for as long as five years, so that the risk of famine is reduced. The Kipsigis appreciate having a grain with good keeping qualities, so that the surplus from good years can be kept in store for the bad years. *Wimbi* is used largely in the making of beer, which plays an important part in the ceremonial, social and economic life of the tribe. Though maize flour is now used to some extent in the making of beer, it does not lend itself to the manufacture of malt.

The cultivation of wimbi (*peek*) plays such an important part in the Kipsigis way of life and follows such a strict routine that it deserves a detailed description. Every man cultivates a separate field for every one of his wives. The fields are referred to as belonging to the man, but when the grain is in the store it is said to belong to the wife. If a wife leaves home for any reason she cannot take the grain with her. A widow with young children owns her own field. If she has an unmarried adult son, the field is referred to as his property, as he does all the man's share of the work for her. The harvested grain is stored in the widow's house and is regarded as her own. In the case of an elderly widower, his children do most of the field work for him. If there are no children of working age, the *kokwet* will make a field for either widow or widower. In cases of poverty the work is done without thought of remuneration, but if the widow or widower has sufficient grain left over from the previous harvest, the usual communal beer party is held and all those who have helped attend and drink beer as a payment for their work. Such a beer party is called a *kokwet* as it is attended by all members of the *kokwet*. Anyone who is unable to complete his field for any reason calls in the help of the *kokwet*. Apart from this organised form of assistance, there is the help given by relations, friends and neighbours, especially for those who are popular and who help others themselves. Helpers other than relations are called *Morik*. At any stage of field work this voluntary help is available, whether it is unremunerated or paid for by a beer party, and is an important means of social intercourse.

Field work is divided between men and women: clearing the land—men; burning the clearing—men or women; digging—men and women; burning the turves—women; spreading the ash from the turves—women; sowing—nearly always men; raking in the seed—men and women; final gathering up of rubbish—women; cutting fencing sticks—men; carrying the fencing sticks—women and men; erecting the fence—men; hand weeding—women, children and old men; harvesting—all hands; stacking and carrying the harvest—women; threshing and winnowing—women and girls; grinding—women. When men and women work side by side, men wear their garment round their waist, but often men dig in the morning and evening while the women are at housework and the women come to the field during the day. Some women prefer to work with men as there is less talk and more gets done.

Wimbi is rarely sown on old land as the crop is liable to fungoid diseases and likes plenty of potash. An old field has to be left at least three years, and usually four or five, to develop a good turf which will burn when dry, or a good covering of bush sufficient when cut or dug

up to burn over the whole ground. In this way potash is produced and fungoid diseases are destroyed. The field is dug in such a way that the turfs come off in large thin slabs two ft. by one ft. to four ft. by one-and a half ft. These are stacked carefully in heaps when dry and smouldering ashes are inserted into the stacks. The heaps smoulder away for two or three days and emit a characteristic and not unpleasant smell. Finally little mounds of bright red earth and ash are left, which the women scatter evenly over the whole field. The field is then left untouched until the traditional time for sowing arrives, or until sufficient rain has fallen if the season happens to be late.

The older men practise a curious method for ascertaining the correct time for sowing. On a clear evening just after sunset, an old man squats on the ground and takes liquid snuff poured from a horn, which he wears on a chain over one shoulder, first into one nostril and then into the other. To prevent the juice from running out, he pinches his nose with finger and thumb and tilts his head backwards until he assumes a position suitable for the enjoyment of the snuff. After taking snuff in this way for many years a man can adjust the tilt of his head with some exactitude. While in this position, the old man directs his gaze to the Pleiades (*koremerik*). If this constellation is visible beneath his bushy eyebrows, he knows that sowing time has arrived. Some men in the *kokwet* are usually expert broadcasters and sow for all their neighbours The grain is sown without any recultivation, however much weed may have grown up. Immediately after sowing the land is lightly cultivated, either by men or women, and after a few days the withered weeds are gathered up into heaps by the women and the field made smooth.

After the seed has been sown, a fence is made for the field which usually contains patches cultivated by several persons. The fence is a barrier against cattle, goats, sheep and buck. Upright posts about six feet high are stuck in the ground in pairs and smaller sticks laid horizontally between them. The uprights are tied together with long thin strips of bark and bast. Some six to eight weeks after sowing the field is weeded by women and girls, who kneel and laboriously pick out every weed by hand; in this work they are often helped by old men and boys.

Sometime between seed time and harvest a small replica of the great *kapkorosit*, smaller than the house *mabwaita*, is erected in every field. This is made of sacred plants which vary according to clan. It is usually made during *Putisiet*, the period from May to June when the fields are being weeded. Erection is sometimes delayed but it must not be carried out in the month of August. It is not until just before the harvest that a fire is lit at the foot of the *kapkorosit* on the west side. The scented *segechewet* plant is burnt on the fire, together with a very small piece of hard sheep's fat (not from the tail) and a *kipramut* of beer is placed close by. This rite is carried out only by men as owners of the fields. If a man has two wives, he builds the *kapkorosit* on the boundary between their two fields. When the crop is harvested a circle of grain is left round the *kapkorosit*, sufficient to fill two baskets, say twenty four pounds when threshed. This is kept separate from the rest of the harvest and is made into beer for the man and his friends. This grain is referred

to as being for the men, whereas the rest is spoken of as belonging to the woman of the house, who uses it to feed the family. Apparently the erection of a small *kapkorosit* is a prayer for good crops, and the subsequent offering of incense and beer, the harvest thanks-giving.

When the harvest begins the Kipsigis say: *Kitongoii pekwe*, 'Begin the harvest', and the women tie two heads of grain to their neck ornaments, *Tongoianik*. When the first food is cooked from the harvested grain a little is smeared on the supporting beams of the attic, a rite in which men, women and children all take part. Before the first grain of the season was placed in the attic it was customary for the Kipsigis to beat the floor of the house, but this custom has been abandoned for a long time. Harvest is a busy time with all hands turning out daily in the fields. It is a tedious business and should there be much rain the grain falls readily and is lost. The men squat and the women kneel to wield the small knife, with which the tough stalks are cut with a swift jerk. The severed heads are collected in the empty hand and then thrown into large beehive shaped baskets, which are made by men but may only be carried by women. The bulk of the heads of grain are stacked in heaps in the field and covered with large leaves for from four to six days. The fresh grain varies in colour from palest yellow to dark bright brown, but in the heaps it undergoes a kind of fermentation which reduces it to an almost uniform brownish colour.

Almost every owner of a field makes beer (a *kokwet*) for his neighbours, who have harvested for him on the day of the beer drink, so that the turn out on that day is usually some twenty to fifty men and their wives. About three o'clock the harvesters adjourn to the beer drink. Usually two large six to eight gallon spherical pots are set half buried in the ground on the cleared space outside the owner's house. If the weather is hot a rough canopy of leafy branches is made. Under this some fifty men seat themselves in an ellipse facing the two pots. Some come provided with stools, but the majority improvise seats from turves which they dig up nearby. Every man brings his own beer tube. As these vary from six to twelve feet in length, the men usually form a double row, with the long tubes in the rear and the shorter ones in front. The party extends over some 25 to 30 yards, but a gap is left in the ellipse of drinkers so that the woman of the house and her friends may bring hot water from time to time to pour into the beer. From this vantage point by the entrance, the owner keeps order if there is a tendency for the party to become too noisy. He rarely drinks much himself. Few women drink but any who wish to are welcomed and presented with a beer tube, as they do not have one of their own. They sit near the entrance as far back as possible and do not stay long. Round about a number of men, who do not belong to the *kokwet* or who have not helped with the harvest, wait in the hope that the owner will ask them to join the party.

Chapter XIV

FOOD

THE main dish is always *Kimiet*, *Wimbi* flour boiled to the consistency of plum pudding. This is either poured into *keskesik* (small tightly woven baskets) to set or direct on to a *kerebeita*, a square of softened floured hide. The proper cooking of this food is important as the Kipsigis appreciate well ground and well cooked food. Cooking is always done by the women and men disclaim any knowledge of the art. *Kimiet* is prepared in the following manner: a large earthen pot (*teret*) of water is brought to the boil and flour is added little by little. While the flour is being added it is stirred in by a *purubet*, a stick with two short cross pieces at right angles, which is twizzled between the palms of the hands to form a whisk. When the mixture becomes too stiff to stir in this way, it is stirred with a *muganget*, a heavy stick with a knob at the end. During the latter part of the operation the fire is kept low. The final result depends on the proper adjustment of the amount of flour mixed with the water and on the stirring. The *muganget* is wielded with both hands with a pounding motion which searches the round sides of the pot. This food must not be cut with a steel knife but has to be broken or cut with a *segetiet*, or curved wooden knife. To be obliged to eat *kimiet* on its own is a serious matter; it is called *muniasta* and cannot be offered to a guest without apology. The scarcity of other foods to eat with *kimiet* is called *sinet*; lack of the staple food is *rubet*, or famine.

In cattle country milk is the commonest of the supplementary foods. This is usually prepared as *mursik* by the addition of wood ash (potash), which causes an alkaline fermentation by which the curd solidifies. The method of cleaning the milk gourds is also important for this purpose. They are first cleaned by scraping them round with the curved midribs of the common wild palm (*sosiot*). While they are still wet they are burnt out with sticks of *senetwet*, which kills extraneous bacteria and at the same time imparts a peculiar flavour to the gourds. Milk prepared in this way will keep a fortnight, an important matter for the bush-land people, who may live twenty miles from their cattle and who may send every ten days or so for milk. The majority of Kipsigis do not like fresh milk (*lolongeiwek*) as well as *mursik*.

Both wild and cultivated vegetables, boiled to a pulp in very little water, are the commonest and cheapest additive to *kimiet* in the bush-land. The chief cultivated varieties are *nderemek* (a rank juicy sweet leaved creeper), *sagek*, which is slightly bitter, and the sweet *mborochek*. Among the wild varieties are *keldichek*, the bitter *suik*, a nettle (*siek*), a wild rhubarb (*mendeiwet*), a dock (*kapsereraiwek*), *raparapchet* and

SOLOMON K. KOSKEI

nyonyaoek; the last four are used less frequently than the others. The mushroom (*pobat*) is much appreciated, but the kind considered edible in England is not eaten, although it is known. *Pungunerek*, small mushroom-like fungi, which come up in large patches during the heavy rains are a great delicacy boiled with a little water and finished in fat.

Meat is roasted or stewed. Sometimes a sheep or goat is specially slaughtered for food, but it is generally a useless one, unless it is for some special guest or the visit of a rarely seen relation. Only the very rich kill cattle for food. Meat is usually eaten only when there is a death in the flock or herd, or when it is necessary to sacrifice a goat or sheep for a sick person or for a ceremony. Whatever the occasion of slaughter, an animal is always killed in the prescribed way, called *keyeny* (see p. 31). Women are prohibited from killing animals of any kind, but they may cut up the meat of an animal which has died. Unmarried girls dislike carrying meat and will usually refuse to do so.

The blood of cattle, goats and sheep is used, not in place of meat, but as a relish with *kimiet*, sometimes instead of vegetables or milk but more commonly cooked with vegetables. Animals are bled not merely for the sake of the blood but also to improve their condition. The following is the method of bleeding. A man or boy straddles the standing goat and ties a thong round its neck well back, which is twisted tightly till the jugular vein can be felt. A second man takes careful aim within a few inches of the vein and shoots a special arrow (*loinet*) from a tiny bow into the vein. The marksman catches the blood in the *tabet*, which is held in one hand while he stirs the blood with the other. *Loinik* are of various sizes according to the animal to be bled. They have a broad flat point like a finger nail, which is bound with *tapsinet* (a thread made from a tough thin skin, such as red duiker) at such a distance from the point that it will merely pierce one wall of the vein. When the constricting thong is removed, the flow of blood ceases at once on the wound being pressed with the finger. The animal shows little sign of inconvenience and the wound heals at once.

All these foods are auxiliary to *kimiet*. Milk and meat (or soup) may not be eaten on the same day by anyone except a very sick person. A man who contravenes this Semitic like custom is called a *pitorin* and it is said that the cow or goat from which the milk was taken will dry up.

A special food which is eaten by itself at any time of the day is the highly appreciated malt food called *musarek*. Flour is boiled with an excess of water and allowed to cool till morning. Ground malt (see p. 102) is then stirred in, in the proportion of one part of malt to four parts of flour, and the mixture is placed in a warm place, usually in the attic. In fifteen to twenty hours it will be ready to drink, as the diastase of the malt will have converted into sugar a large enough proportion of the starch to make a thick, sweet, bubbling, non-alcoholic white gruel. When only a small quantity of *musarek* is required ground malt is added to food left over, *moboriet*, which has been mashed up with water. This is often done as food is never wasted or thrown away.

Honey is a luxury chiefly obtained during the first three months of the year. It is either chewed in the comb or mixed with water and taken

as a drink. A large proportion of the people have one or more honey barrels, which are usually perched in isolated trees some way from home. Honey barrels which are about fifteen to eighteen inches in diameter and five feet long are made from a log of soft wood (usually *Aonet*) split in half longitudinally so that the two halves can be hollowed out. After an oblong hole about four by two inches has been cut in the middle of the underside, the two halves are tied together with rope and covered with bark to protect them from the rain.

The Kipsigis diet is very limited. They are frugal eaters and, as a rule, the men have meals only twice a day. When on a journey or when for any other reason food is not obtainable, they will go without for twentyfour hours (*rugut*) without complaint. One of their pleasantest characteristics is their unselfishness where food is concerned. Even when very hungry themselves they share what food there is with anyone. When food is accepted from a friend or stranger, they eat sparingly and with many protestations that they have had enough. In the family children are always fed first; very small children are fed even before a stranger, who takes precedence over all others. Women eat last and are somewhat erratic in their meal times, chiefly perhaps because they are at the source of supplies. Even children rarely exhibit greediness and will refuse to eat until all the other children are ready. A very small child is given its food to itself, but the older ones sit round a common *kerebeita* of *kimiet* and share a gourd of milk or a pot of vegetables, in the same way as the men do. Food is rarely superabundant and only sufficient grain is ground for the needs of the day. One of the minor duties carried out by a child at meal times is the provision of a half gourd of water for his father and mother. The child pours the water out slowly, so that the parents can wash their hands in the falling water before they sit down to eat. In contrast to the care taken to see that children have plenty to eat even when grown ups have to go hungry, the latter may not eat anything which has fallen on the ground, but such food is always given to the children.

Some prohibitions are observed with regard to eating. A child may not eat or drink with its parents or use any of their utensils. After the age of about thirteen a child may eat with its mother, but when milk, water, *musarek* or soup is taken with food the mother must finish with the vessel entirely and then hand it to the child. Young children may not eat with men off the same plate until they are about twelve years old. Even then they may not put food to the mouth or dip into any food receptacle until the men have quite finished with it. (There are usually special receptacles for the children's liquid food.) Grown-up sons and daughters may eat with their father or mother, but may not drink from, or dip into, any vessel until their parents have finished with it. This prohibition is not so strictly observed among women. Men of any age set may eat together, but men of one age set may not drink from, or dip into, a vessel until those of senior age sets have finished with it. Men may not eat or drink off or out of the same utensils as the children (whether grown up or not) of men of their own age set, as they are *sanik*, or possible relations by marriage. Although this prohibition applies

to both male and female children, it is not so rigorously observed among women. Food or drink may not be taken when a person is standing. *Kimiet* may not be cut with a knife. A pot may not be removed from the fire while visiting relatives are present. It would appear inhospitable to do so and is an instance of the special respect always shown to relations, especially relations by marriage.

Generally speaking both men and women will eat any cloven-footed animal, but few others. Although the *kesengit*, a heavy bristly-haired rabbit-like animal, is eaten, few Kipsigis will eat the hare as they say it is a dirty-feeding, excrement-eating animal. For a similar reason some will not eat wild pig. Elephant and hippopotomus are highly appreciated and a few will eat a little lion or leopard meat. Zebra is not eaten, except perhaps in secret when away from home on a hunting expedition. Few birds are eaten other than game birds such as guinea-fowl, partridge and quail, but women will not eat these. Men refuse to eat duck, but some will eat chickens. In the old days fowls were abhorred to such an extent that few men would eat either chickens or eggs and women would not eat chickens and would even vomit when they saw eggs being eaten. Moles and cane-rats are eaten, but not rats and mice. Children may eat many things which are refused by adults, such as hare and all kinds of small birds other than carrion feeders. All these customs vary slightly from clan to clan. The members of some clans avoid hunting when their wives are pregnant, as it is thought that the killing of an animal under these circumstances sometimes causes deformity in a child.

The following animals, which with few exceptions are beneficial to man, must not be killed: crested and some other cranes, secretary birds, black or crested eagles, greater and lesser hornbills, crows, rain-birds, tick birds, black and white singing wagtails, singing thrush, frogs, chameleons, lizards, mantis, bats, shrews, *Kipdudunyet* and a sharp-tailed grub which lives in cow dung (*kipkeleny monengot*). As the majority of the birds and reptiles are insectivorous, it might suggest that the Kipsigis have a long association with agriculture, or that they obtained some of their traditions from an agricultural tribe. If any of the above animals is killed purposely or accidentally in a house or gets burnt in a fire, it is thought that some misfortune will befall the household. If the crested crane is killed, it is said that numbers of his fellows will come and pull down the house of the slayer. Should one be killed by mistake, sodom apples are gathered and scattered round the house. Children are told that when the birds see the sodom apples they are content as the *Tugap muget* has been paid. (Sodom apples are called *Tugap labot*, the *labotwet* cattle (see p. 50) and *tugap muget* are the cattle given in compensation for any homicide (see p. 113). Fat from a ram's tail is poured on the fire if a lizard is killed in a house. The same fat is heated and smeared on an implement (other than a stick) with which a snake is killed in a house or outside. Some say that milk is poured on the place where a frog is killed in a house. In no case is grain scattered (*kibyesta peek*) as is done in the case of spirits. The custom regarding the killing of a *talamwet* locust when found on a path is described on page 32.

APPENDIX 13: The Origin of Cooking.

Chapter XV

BEER

BEER plays an important part in the ceremonial, social and economic life of the Kipsigis. It has to be provided for most of the tribal and personal ceremonies; it is used as payment for almost every kind of work; and it is the highest form of entertainment a man can provide for his friends. To a people without the amenities of village life, the beer pot is the centre of social intercourse. Round it are discussed all manner of social matters and strangers from afar drop in and bring the latest news. The younger men air their grievances and troubles—and then forget them. The elders remember rather sadly and with very few words the days of their greatness, when life was free and war was their life. A people whose daily recreation was war naturally developed few other pastimes, so that beer and the social life that centres round it is almost their sole relaxation. To many Kipsigis, life without beer would be a very dull affair indeed.

The Kipsigis always drink their beer through tubes five to twelve feet long, made from the *rogoret* creeper, the pith of which is removed by a long slip of bamboo or a thin wire. The end which is put in the pot is cut very much on the slant and fitted with a sieve, about three inches by three-quarters of an inch, woven from fine slips from the leaf and midrib of the *sosiot* palm. This method of sipping slowly from one large communal pot, with the guests sitting round in a large circle, converts what might be a mere drinking bout into a social gathering.

The *kokwet* is a public beer party which is given in return for work done, so that everyone who has helped with the work is entitled to drink the beer. Work for which a *kokwet* is held includes the digging of a new field, harvesting, building and fencing. Sometimes a *kokwet* is held as a means of barter: a husband with no cows in milk will give a party when his wife is expecting a baby. Those who attend provide two gourds of milk for the use of the expectant mother. Such a *kokwet* is called *kokwetap senendet* the sacred creeper. The only occasions when large quantities of beer are brewed for ceremonial purposes are the *Kayaet*, or fourth ceremony of the initiation, and the marriage ceremonies, *Suetap Tuga* and *Katunisiet*, to which all relations from far and near are invited. In most other cases ceremonial beer is very similar to the private beer party, *keregut*, but greater decorum is expected of the guests on ceremonial occasions. Private beer parties are usually called *keregut* from the name of a small beer pot, since these parties are generally on a much smaller scale than the *kokwet* or ceremonial gatherings. Owing to the large number of people present, *kokwet* beer

is drunk from large pots, *loenik* and the medium sized *terenik*. A *keregut* is kept very secret and invitations to it are given only on the day it is held, so that news of it may not spread. If the news got round many people would come, sit outside the house and wait to be asked in.

The procedure at ceremonial beer and at the *keregut* is similar, while at the *kokwet* etiquette is relaxed. The *kokwet* is always held outside the house on the clearing (*piut*), unless rain drives the party indoors. It usually takes place in the afternoon between three and sunset, but occasionally a postponed *kokwet*, *Kipkoloit*, is held in the morning especially if the weather is hot. Ceremonial beer is drunk at varying times depending on the ceremony. The *keregut* usually begins in the early evening and continues till ten o'clock, or even midnight. In such cases guests who live a long way away stay the night, and the prohibitions with regard to sleeping in the house of certain relatives by marriage and men of the previous age set may be relaxed. This concession allows anyone to sleep in the lower part of the house but not in the bed place (*itok*) or the child's bed place (*itogutap lakwa*). Advantage is taken of this relaxation of customary procedure only when absolutely necessary, and the stricter people will refuse to stay even though the alternative is several miles walk in the dark after midnight. The *keregut* and ceremonial beer may only be drunk within doors.

To the *kokwet* everyone entitled to drink brings his own beer tube—and often spare ones for those who may be asked to join in. Anyone may ask for permission for a particular friend or guest to be allowed to join the party. At the *keregut* the host and his neighbours usually supply the *rogorosiek*. At the *kokwet* a man may bring a stool, but more usually turf seats are cut instead. When an honoured guest arrives he is immediately offered a stool. At *keregut* and ceremonial beer, skins or seats are provided by the house owner. On no account may a person step over a beer tube; the tubes are lifted when anyone wishes to pass so that he passes underneath them.

There are certain formalities at beer parties indoors, including a *kokwet* held in a house on account of the weather. The host sits either on the west of the fire, *Koima*, and faces the door, or at the door on its west side, also *Koima*. In these positions he will not only be able to see who enters the house, but also is well placed to control the company. It is a custom that any friend or acquaintance may present himself at the door for permission to enter. In fact, he enters and squats just inside the doorway, so that the host may see who he is. The host signifies consent by saying to the visitor, *Itoch*, 'come up', or his refusal by saying *Nyon*; often the uninvited guest will be told to come back later. When he leaves the house he must turn round and go out face forward. At a *keregut* and ceremonial beer, there are some little rites which are not observed at a *kokwet*. Sprays of specially cleaned *seretiot* grass are arranged on the floor round the pot. When beer has to be carried from one house to another, *seretiot* grass is tied round the neck of the pot. Soon after the pot has been set up—in the hole dug for it a little below the fireplace—and filled to the brim, the froth and bubbles on the surface are scrutinised for indications as to whether rain is likely soon

and whether the friendship of those present will persist. Food is usually supplied for a *keregut* or family party, but not at a *kokwet*. At large ceremonies *musarek*, or malt food, is provided in huge quantities. When food is eaten under such circumstances, a little is put beside the pot and similarly if water is drunk a little is poured out near the pot. If the beer is outside at a *kokwet*, this rite is not performed in the case of food, but anyone drinking water must pour some on the ground near the pot.

At a *keregut* or at ceremonial beer there are many pleasing little amenities. If a man enters without a beer tube, he will be offered one at once by a neighbour until one can be procured for his use. From time to time enquiries are made as to whether the *rogorosiek* are drawing well; if they are not the host or a friend will put them in order or exchange them for better ones. Politeness and good fellowship are the order of the day, but sometimes the usual reticence is thrown aside and enthusiastic general handshaking takes place. One of the older men initiates this. Half-rising he holds out his hands across the circle of guests and says to one to whom he feels particular friendship, 'Let us greet one another.' With hands crossed in a strong grip they raise their hands and say repeatedly: *Ichamege*, *Ichamege mising*, *Sere* and at the final shake they almost throw each other's hand down. Sometimes an old man will squirt beer into his friend's palm before shaking hands. General handshaking then ensues and everyone beams with a mixture of kindness and embarrassment at this exhibition of unwonted feeling. Usually at such meetings an old man asks blessings on all the Kipsigis most value in the very impressive *Kaberuret*. As the old man chants each item, the company repeats the last words in a deep-voiced chorus. As he raises his voice to urgency and lowers it again in impressiveness, the chorus follows his mood and echoes his feelings. Towards the end of the blessing his speed increases and the chorus ends in a crash, though no voices are raised except that of the elder.

Indoor beer parties are nearly all extremely well conducted and the conversation is controlled. The rule is that one man speaks at a time and the questions or replies made by others are deferred until he has finished. If the matter under discussion is of great importance, the speaker emphasises his words with a *saruriet*, a fly-whisk made of an ox tail (or better a wildebeeste tail). When he has finished he hands the *saruriet* to the next speaker as a sign that he has the floor. Between speeches conversation is carried on between neighbours in low voices until the host asks for silence for the next speaker. The conduct of the party depends much upon the capacity of the host, who acts as a kind of chairman. As the party progresses and the guests get more and more talkative, judicious adjustment of the beer is important. The beer is drunk neat to begin with until there is room to pour boiling water into the pot. Subsequently beer or boiling water is added to make the beer stronger or weaker. The woman of the house and perhaps a few friends sit near the fire preparing the boiling water. In the case of a big *kokwet* this is a laborious task in which neighbours come to help. Both men and women may pour water into the beer, but only men may add beer to the pot when it is drunk outside. Women occasionally add beer

at a *keregut*.

Women take very little part in the discussions and, when they do, only at small parties. There is no prohibition on them joining in, but most of them do not like to appear forward. For a woman to get the least drunk, or even to appear to drink much, is a serious social offence. But the presence of the women at these functions means that the conversation is always decorous. A man who uses improper language, when the beer has gone to his head, earns a very unpleasant reputation. He is said to 'make one ashamed', *kendere piich*. At a *kokwet* there are few or no women present and consequently greater licence is allowed, with the result that towards the end of the party the gathering may become very noisy but seldom quarrelsome.

The brewing of beer is entirely women's work. The woman of the house makes small quantities for home consumption and small parties, but for a *kokwet* or other large gathering her neighbours help in many of the stages. There are three, or perhaps four, reactions involved in the Kipsigis brewing method. Coarsely ground flour meal is mixed with water in large baskets (holding some 50 to 60 lb.) until it adheres in large solid lumps. These are placed in a pit about three feet deep, which is lined very carefully with the large, untorn, half-leaves of the wild banana. When the pit is half-full, strips of the split midrib of the same plant are inserted into the mass and more of these strips are added when the pit has been filled. The ends of the leaves, which are left protruding round the side of the pit, are then folded over and covered with additional leaves. At least a foot of earth is heaped on the top of the pit, in which the grain remains buried from eight to sixteen days, depending on whether the weather is dry or wet. The required reaction takes place more quickly when the temperature is high. After the hole has been uncovered, the contents are roasted gently (with continual stirring) on large broken pots. The mixture is not roasted to dryness, but until it forms gelatinous granules, which are dried in the sun. In this form it is called *mayuwek* and may be kept indefinitely.

Malt is prepared from *Wimbi*, which is wrapped in a neat bundle of leaves and placed in the river to soak. After soaking for some eighteen hours, the bundles are placed in the sun on the roof of the house to hasten germination. Sometimes the *Wimbi* is sufficiently germinated in twenty-four hours, but if it is not it is placed in the warm attic for another day and finally dried on skins in the sun. It is then called *mermeruk* and may be kept for several months, but is subject to attack by weevils. Four days before beer is required, the malt is ground coarsely and mixed with *mayuwek* in earthen pots which are filled nearly full of water. The proportions by volume are roughly one part malt, four parts *mayuwek* and six parts of water. The mixture is kept in a warm place (usually the attic) and next day fermentation is visible. When it is too vigorous some of the contents are scooped off and placed in another pot by the housewife, who has to get up several times during the night to do this. On the fourth day the fermentation has gone far enough and the beer must be drunk either that day or the next before it goes sour. It is never so good on the fifth day as on the fourth.

The chemical changes are effected by some transformation of the starch by means of the juice of the wild banana and without the addition of yeast. It is possible that there is sufficient wild yeast or other ferments in the utensils or houses to carry out the change from sugar to alcohol, at the same time as the starch is converted to sugar by the malt. A distinguishing feature of the Kipsigis brewing method is the small quantity of malt (say twenty per cent) required for the reaction. It is possible that the *mayuwek* formed in the first stage of the process contains some substitute for yeast, though it is surprising that it can withstand the heat of the roasting process. The solid *mayuwek* is not sweet and the juice of the wild banana is said to be almost poisonous, or 'it disagrees with one'. After the *mayuwek* has been dug up, the juicy stalks of the wild banana are sucked with relish although they are still sour. A considerable quantity of *mayuwek* is eaten by the women during the roasting process and considered quite a delicacy. A drink is also made from the solid *mayuwek* by the addition of cold water to form a thin milky fluid, which is boiled after it is separated from the husks which settle out on standing. This liquid contains no sugar and is somewhat sour.

When the brewing process begins the Kipsigis say *Keriech*; on the second day *Kutu*; on the third *Murto*; on the fourth *Karurio*. Although honey-beer is known, its use is fortunately not approved. It is a clear liquid, which may be drunk rapidly from a receptacle with disastrous results, while the *mayuwek* of the Kipsigis requires the use of the sociable *rogoret* through which it can only be sipped slowly. In the case of honey-beer, the yeast substitute is supplied by the wild *lufa*. A natural alcoholic beverage, which is found in some districts but is becoming very scarce, is the juice from the stem of the wild palm (*sosiot*) when it is polling. It is a delicious drink something like cider.

APPENDIX 14: A Kipsigis Blessing.

CHAPTER XVI

DEATH

NO display or ceremony attends death amongst the Kipsigis. Because there is no ostentation it must not be supposed they do not feel sorrow. Their sense of loss and grief is very real and deep and many of the small customs relating to death are quiet signs of mourning. The loss caused by death is sometimes felt so severely that it is followed by suicide or a mild form of madness. The usual response is one of silent grief. The only time any display is permissible is immediately after death, when the nearest relative wails aloud outside the house. The mother, wife or sister usually wails in this manner, but sometimes it is the father, husband, brother or children. The death is thus announced to the neighbourhood, so that all work is stopped in the *kokwet* for the next two days. On the third day work is permissible but on the fourth all work must be stopped. This is called *kiret*, or prohibition, when used in this context. The area in which *kiret* is observed is, if possible, bounded by water. If any combined work, a *kokwet*, has been arranged it is allowed to take place, probably because the beer that follows it has been prepared and would go bad if it was not consumed on the appointed day. The *kiret* is not a sign of mourning or respect, since the custom is observed to some extent for a stillborn child or a child born before initiation. In these cases the *kiret* lasts only two days and purification takes place on the third. A one-day *kiret* is observed for the death of a dog, a remarkable custom in view of the Kipsigis dislike of this animal.

Although death from natural causes usually occurs within the house, unless the sick person asks to be carried outside, it must not take place in the *itogut*, or husband and wife's bed. Immediately after death, the door of the house is closed. In the evening the relatives or, if there is no male relative, the neighbours come and sacrifice a lamb or kid. The grass from the stomach of this animal (*eyat*) is placed at the door of the house, so that it may be opened for the man whose duty it is to remove the body. The expression used is *Sikelage kot*, which is apparently derived from the same root as *Lach*, the word used when the doorway is decorated at certain ceremonies with sodom apples.

The body is normally disposed of in the bush a considerable distance from the house. It may be carried in any direction except the east, since the east is the direction of health, life and prosperity (*Sopondo*); the prevailing wind also comes from the east. Children who have not cut their teeth and men and women who have a grandson through a son are buried. Other grandchildren are not considered in this connection,

for if they are by a daughter they are not of the grandparents' clan, while a granddaughter on marriage ceases to belong to her father's clan. Burial always takes place in the dung heap (*Kapngatat*), which is then covered with rubbish and allowed to become overgrown; on no account must it be touched again. A house in which death has occurred is not abandoned in this manner. In theory hyenas are supposed to eat the corpse, but in many districts there are few or no hyenas. The importance of the hyena should not be over-estimated, although anxiety is caused when a hyena drags a corpse back to the house. When this happens a goat has to be sacrificed outside the house. Sacrifice at the place to which the body has been removed has no connection with hyenas, as it may take place years after the death. Such a sacrifice is usually performed to reconcile the deceased's spirit with some living relative, or to reconcile two living persons before the spirit of their dead relative. The place of sacrifice is determined by the *Chebsageyot*, who receives instructions on this point from the spirit of the deceased.

The removal of the body from the house is a man's duty, except on the death of the youngest child. A man's body is carried out by his eldest son; if his eldest son is not present, the task is performed by another son; if there are no adult sons, the duty devolves (in the following order of precedence) upon: his eldest brother, another brother, father, father's brothers in order of seniority, father's brother's son and so on, always upon the nearest relative on the male side. A woman's body is carried by her husband; if he cannot perform this duty and she has no children, members of her father's family carry the body in the order: brother, father, father's brother, father's brother's son, always the eldest available, except when it falls on a very old man. If a woman has children the duty falls on the husband's family in the order: grown-up son, husband's brother, husband's brother's son, and so on. Only in the last resort does the duty devolve upon the woman's brother, as she is no longer of his clan. The father carries out the body of his child, with the exception of the youngest, which is carried out by its mother. If the father cannot fulfil this obligation, the order (for both male and female children) is the same as for a man, as all children belong to the father's clan. Delay is often caused while a search for the proper relative goes on. If the proper relative is not within a reasonable distance, it is the duty of the next in order to undertake the removal.

No family duty is so disliked as this and even the recompense, *Chemusit*, is no mitigation. The four days' uncleanness of the carrier is dreaded, for the sadness of the period which follows the removal of the body is emphasised by the dishevelled appearance of the unclean man, who sits silent and disconsolate apart from the other relatives, who converse when necessary in low tones. On the fourth day the carrier purifies himself at the river and is anointed with the oil from a ram's tail. Even after this the stricter people do not associate normally with their fellows and will only enter the houses of relations.

For many months the deceased's name is not spoken and he is referred to among relatives as *Chichigonye*, 'the person of yesterday'. A wife is normally known by her husband's name, as *Nebarap Anum*,

'belonging to arap so and so', but after her husband's death this form is no longer used. A widow is commonly addressed as the owner of her child, e.g. *kobot Sawe*, but on the death of the child this form can no longer be used. This avoidance of the names of the dead seems similar to the substitution of other names when in the neighbourhood of dangerous animals, or when a person is suffering from anthrax, but from observation and enquiry it seems certain there is no connection between these ideas in the minds of the people. Perhaps there was originally some other reason for avoiding the names of the recently dead, but today the only reason is to avoid re-awakening the sorrows of relations and friends. This is shown also by the fact that any infringement of this convention is not considered as an offence, but only as a matter of regret. It is much more strictly observed among relatives and intimate friends and especially in the case of wives and mothers recently bereaved.

Ngesiret may perhaps be translated as the outward signs of mourning on the death of a husband or wife. When the wife dies the *ngesiret* is simple: no sacrifice takes place on the day after death, but the *tolaita* (attic support) on the west (*Koima*) side is removed, together with the firestones and the wall of the bed on the same side. The husband is unclean until the fourth day, when a ram is sacrificed and he purifies and anoints himself. When the husband dies a bull is sacrificed on the day after his death, if he was a rich man, or a he-goat if he was poor. Many things are removed from the house: the *mabwaita* (on the east of the house); the *kimonjogut* and *rokiet*; the *tolaita* on the east (*Njon*) the firestones on the east and also the stone forming the top of the fire; the east wall of the bedplace and the foot of the bed (*Ngeromberut*) (see p. 84). All the wife's ornaments are removed, except those connected with the *kerichek*, or charms, she wears. Arm, neck and ear ornaments may be restored under the following circumstances, provided the permission of the elders of the *kokwet* of both sexes is obtained. If a woman has a grown-up son at the time of her husband's death, she may put on new ornaments after about twelve months in place of those she had discarded. She may not wear the old ornaments again, but they may by worn by any other person, including her daughters, and they are usually given away to relatives and friends. At the end of the twelve months a new house may be built complete with bed, firestones, *kimonjogut* and *rokiet*. If the widow has no grown-up son at the time of her husband's death, she must wait until a son comes out of initiation before either ornaments may be worn or parts of the house restored. When a daughter marries, her widowed mother can wear ornaments and restore the house parts. This is a surprising regulation as the daughter on marriage enters a different clan from her father's and widowed mother's.

A widower is only debarred from normal work for four days, but for a widow the *kiret* lasts from two to four weeks according to clan. She is prohibited from bringing firewood, water or vegetables, and from cooking or lighting a fire. All these duties must be done for her by relations or neighbours, who vie with each other in helping a bereaved woman,

unless she has made herself unpopular. At the end of this period a ram is sacrificed and the woman purifies and anoints herself. Although she may also resume a few ornaments (one on the neck and one on each wrist), the full period of mourning continues for about a year.

CHAPTER XVII

PROPERTY AND INHERITANCE

KIPSIGIS society is a mixture of the individualistic and communal. by nature they are so individualistic that no man cares to interfere with another, except under extreme circumstances. For this reason concerted action of any kind is very difficult for them to accomplish and, even when it is customary, it is slow and badly organised. In such important matters as large ceremonies, communal help in field work and the organised hunting of dangerous animals, few Kipsigis seem to have sufficient authority to obtain either rapid or efficient concerted action. The tendency is for every man to act and think for himself. A Kipsigis does not like being directed by others and has no wish to direct others himself.

In the matter of land, however, there is community as all land occupied by the Kipsigis belongs to the tribe as a whole. There is no private ownership of land so that the only real property in their eyes is the ownership of stock. Although there is this general community of land, their attitude towards the land is the same as their attitude towards all matters not controlled by family duty, and, in itself, illustrates their individualistic approach. Any Kipsigis would strongly resent any suggestion that an individual, family or social group, or any authority could tell him he could not build in the place of his choice, graze his herds and flocks over pasture of his own choosing, or attempt to restrain him from moving from one district to another.

Not only is land common property but also all that grows naturally upon it or is found beneath it, such as stone and cattle salt. Personal property is acquired in a thing as soon as work is done on it. A standing tree or a dead fallen tree belongs to the people as a whole, but as soon as a man fells the tree or cuts up the fallen tree, it becomes his sole property. Once acquisition has taken place in this manner, the objects acquired can be left for long periods without any fear of their being stolen. The case of land is similar as, although a person cannot acquire the ownership of land, he can acquire unchallenged use of the land and ownership of the products from the land.

Any man (or woman) can build his house anywhere he pleases in any district and can choose a piece of land to cultivate, either near or far from his house. All the crops he grows upon the land are his and he may continue to cultivate it for as long as he likes. So long as he continues to use the land in this way, nobody can challenge his prior right to do so and he has in this regard perfect security. As soon as he ceases to cultivate the land for one season, the land is again open to everybody

for use as grazing or for cultivation. A field, which was harvested at the end of the last season, is called *Roret* and belongs to the cultivator for several months after harvesting as grazing land. If he does not wish to cultivate it again, others may come and ask him to let them have it; in any case, as soon as it is evident that he has no intention of cultivating, the land is free for others to occupy and use. There is no limit to the area a man may cultivate, provided it does not interfere with the grazing needs of the community. This restriction illustrates the fact that the Kipsigis are primarily a pastoral people; this is also stressed in the obligation every man has to fence his field against stock.

As there is no property in land, there is no question of land being inherited when a man dies. If his wife is alive, she continues to occupy the house and work the field, in the same way as if her husband were alive, for the crops, the house and its contents are as much the property of the wife as of the husband. It is only on the death of the widow that such property is distributed to the sons. When there are no married sons the sheep and goats will remain in the widow's house; even if all the sons are married, they will not remove all the small stock but will leave some for their mother. A certain number of cattle will also be left to supply the widow with milk, although the animals are the property of the sons. Despite the fact that the husband's brothers (and especially the one known as *Kipkondit*) are her legal guardians and helpers, it is the sons, and more especially the unmarried sons, who will live close to the widow and do all the man's work in connection with her house, field, livestock and so on. In general, the widow has the use during her lifetime of as much of her husband's property as she needs for her maintenance and comfort.

The important rules governing inheritance apply in particular to the disposal of the deceased's livestock. Although the principles controlling the division are clear and not very intricate, difficulties and disputes sometimes arise in practice owing to such factors as the indivisibility of animals, differences between male and female, young and old stock and in their potential fertility. The two general principles are: when a man has more than one wife, all his property is divided equally among his houses, irrespective of the number of children in each house; and the property assigned to any one house is divided equally among the sons of the house. These principles ensure that there is no discrimination in favour of seniority, either in the case of the widows or the children. The property of a man is composed of three distinct elements according to the source from which the livestock was derived: that belonging to the whole family because it was inherited by the father (*Tugap geny chebo boyot*); that which was acquired by the fathers' own prowess and industry (*Tuga che kibaru*); and that which belongs to the house, that is the children of one mother. In this last category are stock inherited from the father when the children were minors and, most important of all, presentation cattle received on the marriage of the daughters of the house. In addition, the subsidiary property, such as the grain in the field or store, the house and the utensils in the house, are included as property owned by every house and not by the family as a whole.

The only property over which a man has complete control is that which he has acquired by his own efforts. This he may sell, barter, slaughter or give away during his lifetime if he wishes, but on his death it becomes a part of the inheritable property, as much as the property which he received from his own father. The presentation cattle (*Tugap Koita*) are not the property of the father to do with as he wishes. They are held in trust by him and may not be used for the marriage of another wife, even if his first wife is dead. An exception to this rule is that a woman who takes a wife (see p. 77) may use the presentation cattle from her daughters' marriages for this purpose. Neither inherited nor presentation cattle may be sold except by agreement among all members of the family. Sometimes such an agreement is made when excess male stock are slaughtered or sold and the proceeds are used in such a way (usually by the purchase of female stock) so that none of the heirs suffers any loss from the transaction. When cattle or other stock cannot be divided evenly among the heirs, it is usual for them to be kept together until they increase sufficiently to facilitate further distribution. Strict control is exercised over the entail of stock, which ensures the wife and children against the squandering of the property intended for their support. A man often lends stock which is entailed in the family. Although the word used for this transaction is 'give', it is understood that the stock must be returned some day. On the death of the lender, it is a matter of honour for the borrower to report any such stock to his heirs.

Although seniority brings no advantage in the general distribution of the inheritance, it decides the priorities for the use of the livestock for the marriage of the sons. The eldest son of the first house (*Kot neo*) has the right to marry first, unless a younger son has earned sufficient stock by his own deeds to marry without recourse to the family livestock. The eldest son has the right to use inherited livestock for his marriage, provided by so doing he does not permanently debar his brother from benefiting under the inheritance. If there is a sister, the matter is easily adjusted by the second and other sons using the presentation cattle from her marriage. Even so, the eldest son has the first right to use his sister's presentation cattle for his own marriage, if the inherited cattle are insufficient for this purpose. The eldest son of the second house has the next right to use inherited livestock for his marriage and so on in order of seniority through the houses. When all the eldest sons have been married, then comes the turn of the second sons of the various houses in order of seniority. In most families the daughters' marriages, and the cattle they bring with them, help out the inherited stock sufficiently to procure the marriages of the younger sons. A son of one house may not use the marriage cattle of the daughter of another house (his half-sister) for his marriage.

If a man has daughters but no sons, he becomes guardian of the *Tugap koita* made when the daughters marry and as such he has the use of the stock during his lifetime. When he dies, his widow retains for her lifetime the use of the presentation cattle of her daughter. On her death, this stock passes to her daughter's children under the guardian-

ship of their father; if there is more than one daughter, every family takes the presentation cattle of the mother. If the daughter's husband is dead, his brother becomes guardian, but the produce of the stock is for the mother and her children. When the children grow up, the sons take charge of the stock but still under the supervision of a paternal uncle if one is alive.

The eldest son is awarded the *Chemusit* for the unpleasant duty (*sutet*) of carrying out his father's corpse; if the eldest son did not perform this duty, the recompense is given to the son or other person who did. The eldest son of the second house also takes a *Chemusit*, but as he does not carry the corpse but merely follows his brother he receives a male animal and not the virgin female beast taken by his elder brother. If the father was rich a heifer and a bull respectively are given to the two brothers, but if there are insufficient cattle for his children, a goat or a sheep is taken instead, a female for the elder and a male for the younger brother. The *Chemusit* cannot be taken from the sister's marriage cattle or from the personal property of any of the widows. Small items of personal property are distributed among the family: the snuff-box to the eldest brother of the deceased; his spear to the eldest son; his shield to the second son.

An example illustrates the manner in which the Kipsigis deal with a small inheritance: a man leaves three wives who have four, three and no children respectively; if he leaves four cows, one bull, one ox and some sheep and goats, every house would probably take one cow at once and the other animals would be left until, through the increase of the cow or the sale or exchange of the bull, ox or small stock, there would be sufficient stock for an equal distribution to be made to all the heirs.

The natural guardians of a man's widow's children and property are his brothers, who have sole administration powers over the cattle. If there are no brothers, the next nearest male relation of the deceased takes up the duty. Only in the rare event of there being no relations of the father does the mother's brother (*Mamet*) assume any responsibility. Grown-up sons, especially if they are married, take and look after their own cattle, or at least such part of their property as their guardians assign to them. The sons cannot make any decisions as to the distribution of the cattle, but the elder ones naturally have some influence over their younger brothers and sisters. Any unfair distribution which might result from this influence is countered by the authority of the guardians and the strict duty owed to their 'mothers' by the sons of all the houses.

Although a woman is not said to inherit property, since all inheritance must be in the male line so that ownership is retained in the family, yet she may not only own special property of her own but also, for all practical purposes, she is regarded as joint owner with her husband of all the family property. Unless they had quarrelled or were estranged, no man would sell or dispose of stock without consulting his wife. Similarly no woman would dispose of her own property without discussion with her husband, her husband's brother or his son. Although a field is usually spoken of as being the property of the man and the

grain the property of the woman, in practice both are really jointly owned. A wife may use grain from her husband's field to feed initiates, for which she (and not the husband) receives a sheep or goat (*Chemngobait*) as her private property. Although man and wife would consult together on the disposal of property, a woman may acquire property in her own right, which she might dispose of herself outside the family if she thought fit to take such an unusual course. Such property is acquired when the woman does any work which is outside her family duties: the care of initiates; the practice of *sageyuwek*, for which she receives grain; the manufacture of ornaments and baskets; the baking of pots, an industry carried on only by women.

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Chapter XVIII

HOMICIDE AND THEFT

APART from death caused by witchcraft, homicide is of three kinds: the killing of a *Kipsigisindet* by accident or intent with the drawing of blood; the killing of a *Kipsigisindet* by accident or intent without the drawing of blood; and the killing of foreigners. The first two cases are called *Rumisiet* and the third *Parisiet*. The difference between the two forms of *rumisiet* is that, if blood is drawn, the slayer becomes unclean in the severest sense and can only be purified by going to war (see p. 7). If blood is not drawn the slayer is not considered to be unclean. Any form of accidental death (such as while hunting or as a result of a quarrel over which two men wrestle) is called *Lelet* when it is proved that the survivor was not at fault. The slayer becomes unclean and also pays the same price for the life lost as in the case of deliberate murder. The only difference is that the slayer does not forfeit public respect if the killing was accidental.

A *rumindet* may be killed by members of the injured clan in hot blood, that is on the day of the homicide. To prevent this retributive action, a cow is taken at once by the slayer's relations to the injured clan. Once this has been done no further retaliatory action may be taken, as the case is left for decision after proper trial by the *kokwet*, with the assistance of such *kiruogik* as are summoned by the clans involved. This cow is called *Iringotit* from the transitive verb *ri* ('break') and *ngotit* ('spear'), and the derivation indicates that once the cow has been presented the cattle of the *rumindet*, or of his clansmen, cannot be taken by force, as 'the spear is broken'. In the more common cases of accidental death, *lelet*, the two clans arrange payment amicably between themselves. The usual compensation for a life is nine or ten head of cattle (*Tugap Muget*), but it varies according to the wealth of the clan which has to make payment. The cattle are distributed among the members of the recipient clan, with the nearer relatives of the deceased receiving more than those more distantly related. Usually an ox or cow is exchanged for some sheep or goats, so that the more remote relatives may be paid in this smaller medium. Distribution is arranged by the elders of the clan but if a serious dispute arises, the *kokwet* is consulted and, if necessary, a *kiruogindet* may be called in to give a final decision.

Among a people usually at war with their neighbours, the killing of a foreigner in the old days was not considered a serious offence. No compensation was paid, whether the death occurred in war or not, as compensation is entirely a question of clan. Although the slayer does not become unclean in the same sense as a *rumindet* does, a slight form

of uncleanness is incurred even by the shedding of enemy blood. The *artetap kolet*, 'the sheep of the slayer of an enemy', is sacrificed, the right temple of the slayer is smeared with a spot of red clay and his left temple with a spot of white clay, and one half of his spear blade is painted red and the other half white with the same materials. If peace has been made with a tribe, by the *mumek* ceremony (see p. 7), the killing of a member of that tribe was a very serious offence. The curse of *mumek* would fall on the murderer, so that not only would the offender die, but probably suffering would be brought to all his fellow clansmen.

If a person is burnt or dies as the result of burning, no one may be punished, cursed, or even blamed severely, whether the person responsible is of the same clan as the sufferer or not. It is said that any recrimination would be followed quickly by another death by fire. If death by fire is caused by a member of another clan, the normal compensation is payable, but this is not a punishment or fine. This exceptional procedure (and the prohibition on the burning of a house as punishment or otherwise) is said to be connected with the legend of the burning of the old people in a bush fire during the migration of the Kipsigis (see p. 5).

There is no penalty for wounding and no compensation is payable. Even if years afterwards, death can be traced to an internal injury (*lobutiet*) or a stab or cut (*ngotobet*), the normal compensation for a life is payable, but the *rumindet* does not become unclean unless the wound is still open at the time of death. In their laws regarding homicide it is apparent that the act of killing is not the most serious thing in the Kipsigis mind, but the loss of life to the clan and the spilling of blood in the case of a *Kipsigisindet*, and the breaking of an oath in the case of an enemy. This attitude is not unnatural among a people whose normal life was war, but it does not explain the uncleanness which follows death as a result of the shedding of blood.

The word *chorset* meaning theft does not, of course, apply to the taking of cattle from foreign enemies. Under their code theft was one of the most serious offences and was considered by the Kipsigis to be so anti-social that it was one of the two offences punishable with death.

The fact that the other offence in this category was witchcraft is also an indication of the horror with which the tribe regarded theft. Theft of cattle from a fellow Kipsigis (or from any of the allied tribes) was of very rare occurrence and was generally the result of what was considered to be wrongful withholding of the cattle from the rightful owners. On such occasions a fight would probably ensue, but the *kokwet* would meet at once, call in one or more *kiruogik* if needs be and decide the matter before bad blood was made. When a man was pressed by famine he might pick grain or take a sheep or goat. This theft was considered to be forgivable, provided the thief made a formal apology (*Nyoetap Gat*). This was made early in the morning by the offender, who took a stool, a *Loinet* (bleeding arrow), some sodom apples and a bow twined round with some sacred *senendet* creeper, and placed them at the *mabwaita* of the man from whom the food was stolen. When the owner of the house came out in the morning he knew that grain or an animal had

been stolen but could not resent it. It is understood that if the thief becomes prosperous later he will return the goods taken to appease his hunger. A similar apology is made when a young man steals a girl and marries her without her parents' or guardians' consent, but in this case full reparation (that is the full payment of the marriage cattle) must be made in time. A sheep or goat is taken and tethered to the father's *mabwaita* by the culprit's friends, who make a verbal apology, promise full payment of the marriage cattle and generally speak on behalf of the offender. Anyone who has been rude or violent to an old man will also make a similar formal apology. Should a man nurse his anger and refuse the *Nyoetap Gat*, he puts himself in the wrong in the eyes of the community and the one who has apologised is exonerated. The derivation of the verb *nyogat* is from *nyo*, 'come' and *gadit*, the neck. A somewhat similar custom to the formal apology, *Masagesiet*, is chiefly resorted to by children who wish to go to the initiation, but who can find no one to undertake their board and lodging. It is sometimes carried out by the parents, who watch for an opportunity when nobody is at home to tether a goat or sheep inside the house of the man they wish to undertake the task of looking after the children during initiation. When the owner of the house arrives home and finds the goat, he is probably annoyed but he cannot refuse, although he knows that the sheep or goat will not become his property. He must return it but, if it is in lamb, he can claim the lamb when it is born.

If the formal apology is not carried out after a theft, the thief's crops might be taken, but enough food would be left for his small children. If the thief was known to be a bad character, the *kokwet* punishment would be more severe, his house might be pulled down and his belongings scattered, that is taken by anyone. The crowd who carry out this punishment for theft (and witchcraft) is called *Njoget*, 'an angry punishing crowd'. It is made up almost entirely of women except in the case of the death sentence, which can only be carried out by men. For theft of goods other than stock, the *kokwet* might decide that the man should be beaten or his goods taken. The distinctive characteristic of the Kipsigis view of theft and its punishment is that it is an unnatural offence and that one who steals habitually is a *sogoranet* (see p. 26). Every allowance is made for the circumstances of a theft, such as hunger and poverty in adults and ignorance in children. A first theft is lightly punished but a third offence is so serious it might lead to the punishment reserved for all kinds of unnatural behaviour, death. Children could not be put to death for theft (or witchcraft) because a child is not considered to be a responsible person until after initiation.

The death sentence can only be passed by the *kokwet*, who in all serious matters would enlist the aid of reputable *kiruogik*. Before the sentence is carried out, it is necessary to obtain the consent of the offender's clan. This is given by his fellow clansmen disowning the thief and casting him out of the clan, so that he ceases to be a *Kipsigisindet*. His spirit can never return to be reincarnated in future generations of the clan, but dies forever. The act of disowning is called *kewir en sogot*, 'one throws him with a leaf', from the symbolic act in which

the clansmen throw leaves at the disowned member and one of the member bruises the offender with a stick. After a council at which the death sentence is passed the usual *kimagutit* is not sacrificed (see p.18). The sentence is carried out by a crowd (*njoget*) of men who arm themselves with sharpened sticks, which they throw at the condemned man until he dies. By the participation of a large number of people and by the casting out of the offender, blood guilt and uncleanness are avoided. The sticks used to carry out the sentence are called *mosigisik*, a word which might signify that the victim is no longer considered to be a member of the tribe, (*mo*, 'not', and *sigisio*, 'of the birth'). Under no circumstances might an animal be put to death to atone for an offence committed by a human-being. Although the final punishment for unnatural behaviour is severe, the general principles underlying Kipsigis law have been developed to cope with the circumstances of the tribal way of life, and have made the people law abiding and disciplined in their relations with one another. Cattle theft was a very different matter, as it was not *chorset* to the Kipsigis but was the object of their active lives. There was no death penalty for a successful raid, but death was often the penalty of failure.

One of the most common grounds for trouble between members of the tribe was caused by damage to cultivation from wandering livestock. All fields of grain or vegetables are fenced in areas where there are large numbers of sheep and goats, and it is only in sparsely populated grassland, where fencing materials are lacking, that a man fails to fence his cultivation. If a man does not fence he has no redress for damage done to his crops by stock. A field owner who has been injured in this manner usually beats the herd boy and then goes to within about fifty yards of the stock owner's house and shouts denunciation at him. This relieves the injured man's feelings but does not repair the damage done

APPENDIX 15: Homicide Stories.

CHAPTER XIX

OCCULT PHENOMENA

FOR lack of a better term 'occult' has been used to indicate those phenomena which lie beyond the logic of daily life. There is very little connection in the Kipsigis mind between such phenomena and evil spirits since evil spirits are to all intents and purposes unknown to the Kipsigis. *Sageyuwek* is the only practice which deals with spirits, but the spirits concerned are those of deceased relatives awaiting reincarnation and not evil spirits. It is the curse that is feared by the Kipsigis and not spirits. The curse (*Chupisiet*) comprehends two different activities: the verbal cursing of a person or persons by an individual; and the curse which is brought upon a man when he breaks any law or custom. *Chupisiet* usually refers to the former and there is no word for the natural curse apart from the expression *kechupge* 'one curses oneself.' A common phrase *Koam tengek* expresses the same idea and may be translated 'his offence punishes him'. The natural curse plays a very important role in Kipsigis life, as it is the ultimate sanction behind the recognition and maintenance of tribal custom. When a Kipsigis is asked what punishment follows the committing of a certain offence, he will often reply that there is no punishment laid down by any tribal code; the curse operates automatically when a custom is broken and that is the punishment. This curse, which is of great benefit to the tribe, must not be confused with the cursing practised by a few specialists in *panisiet*, or evil witchcraft, nor with the evil eye or uncleanness. The curse has nothing to do with uncleanness, which is not a penalty incurred for a crime or misdemeanour, and the unclean person is often in no way to blame for his unfortunate state. Uncleanness is removed without the aid of witch-doctors or elders and without payment. The curse is usually not removable when it is the punishment for breaking a law, but if it arises through some cause involving an injured party or has been imposed by the *kokwet*, it is sometimes terminated if it becomes so severe that several of the delinquent's relatives die as a result of its imposition. Removal is effected by a ceremony between the injured party and offender; no payment is made and no help is sought from outside parties.

In general it may be said that the infringement of any custom is attended by some punishment. The degree of punishment, which may range from the severest curse to minor ill luck, varies according to the seriousness of the offence. Nearly all infringements of exogamy rules, sex regulations, rules with regard to birth, and initiation customs are accompanied by the severest curse, which is often transmitted through

the family and clan concerned. Sometimes the natural curse is accentuated by public announcement in the *kokwet*, for instance when theft is undetected or witchcraft is causing a man to become constantly ill for no reason. The procedure when a curse is pronounced at the *kokwet* tree is for a man to rise and pronounce the curse sentence by sentence, while the other men sit and repeat every sentence in chorus. The wording is extempore and varies according to the circumstances and the speaker's inventiveness, but some phrases recur in most ceremonially pronounced curses: *Wechin peik*, 'may water make you ill'; *Wechin kimiet*, 'May food make you ill'; *Wechin mat*, 'may fire harm you'; *Ikubwi*, 'May you fall on your head'; *Imamame*, 'may you curl up in sickness'; *Kininyen kutit*, 'may your mouth be closed'; *Ikwonyen itik*, 'may your ears be deaf'; *Meyen keliek*, 'may your legs be paralysed'; *Ime chitok*, 'may you die in your bed' and the chorus responses: *Meat, kole, meat*, 'Dead they say Dead (or cursed)'.

The curse which follows the breaking of any law is infallible, inevitable, unavoidable. In crimes subject to the curse, it operates automatically and without the necessity for recourse to the council, whether the crime is discovered or not. It is always just as its effects can only be felt by the guilty. Even when a formal pronouncement is made by an individual or the *kokwet*, it cannot affect the innocent if the reason for the pronouncement of the curse is stated. It is commonly used to decide which is the guilty party among a number of suspects. The curse is pronounced and the man who sickens is considered to be the guilty one; this is generally the case and often the sick man confesses and begs for mercy. Any person who abuses the power of the curse is usually actuated by desire for revenge and is called a *ponindet* (see p. 120).

There are numerous expressions in day to day use which contain a verbal curse: *Mein konyek*, 'may your eyes die'; *mein serut*, etc., 'may your nose, etc. die'; *amin kipkaita*, 'may rinderpest eat you'; *Parin Asis*, 'may the Sun (God) kill you'; *Labin oik*, 'may the spirits touch you' and so on. When spoken by children among themselves, such expressions are considered innocuous and they may be used by adults to children without meaning much. No child may use them to an adult and between adult men of similar age they are merely used in fun. The better behaved people do not use them to adults at all and they are never used by younger people to their elders. They are not used towards women, or relations by marriage. Women only use them to children and even then half playfully. When used within these limits, the expressions are not taken seriously with one exception: '*Mein mat* (plural *Meok Mat*), which means literally, 'May your fire die'. To the Kipsigis mind it means much more than this: 'May your family die out', 'May your seed die', 'May your spirit cease to return to the living.' The Kipsigis are unable to say whether *mat* refers to the house fire (symbolic of the family) or the fire of the body (the spirit). Although this expression is considered harmless when used to children, it must on no account be used to an adult. Children are considered to be safe from so terrible an oath, because they are not yet Kipsigis. This expression should not be confused with the common: *Mean mat*, 'may my fire die out'. 'May I

be cursed if I am not speaking the truth.'

An objectionable aspect of the curse is that all Kipsigis believe there are some people who have the power to curse individually and to bring misfortunes upon others. *Chupisiet*, when exercised in this manner with malice, becomes *panisiet*, or witchcraft. It is chiefly old women who make themselves believe, usually as the result of strange coincidences following their machinations, that they have this power and who take a pride in the fear they can cause by being known to possess such powers. This is particularly so since the dreaded public execution (*laget*) has fallen into abeyance. It is this private form of cursing, and not the curse which follows the infringement of tribal law, which causes so much distress. There is no specific word for the self acting curse which is the great upholder of the law, but the fear of being cursed by an individual may be used in such a way as to work against justice. Between the two stands the formal curse by the *kokwet*, which is used against unknown evil-doers in an attempt to find the guilty party. The belief in the curse, which follows automatically any infringement of Kipsigis law, is merely the belief (in its full primitive strength) that wrong doing brings its own punishment.

Some people are credited with the control of supernatural power of different kinds and in varying degrees. If such power is used to satisfy revenge, hatred or envy, or to harm the innocent, it is called *panisiet*. The effects usually attributed to *panisiet* are death and sudden or prolonged sickness from unknown causes, in human beings and livestock. These effects may be produced with or without visible agency, although poisoning, which is known to the Kipsigis by hearsay, seems never to be practised. Cases occasionally occur were a man dies from an overdose of a particular medicine, so that some suspicion has fallen on the wife who administered it, but poisoning is so abhorrent to the Kipsigis that the presumption in such cases is always that the tragedy was accidental. An *orkoyot* may or may not practise evil witchcraft. Some are credited with supernatural power capable of bringing or stopping rain, and bringing success to certain ventures — and, incidentally, profit to themselves. All evil working *orkoiik* belong to the family of the notorious Masai born *orkoyot*, Arap Koylegen, who came to Kipsigis from Nandi shortly before the advent of the British government. That these men are regarded by the Kipsigis as being *ponik* (practitioners of *panisiet*) rather than *orkoiik* is shown by the fact that the tribal leaders always talked of putting them to death by *laget*, the normal penalty for *panisiet*.

Witchcraft is considered so serious and anti-social a crime that it is, with habitual theft, the only offence to which the death penalty is applied. Kipsigis reasoning on this seems to be similar to that on the killing of animals who act in an unnatural manner. Another indication of the horror which *panisiet* inspires is the fact that it is the only occasion when torture is used (see p. 40), apart from the very rare punishment for repeated marital infidelity.

Various petty forms of witchcraft may be attributed to anybody and accusations or suspicions of its practice are all too common. Very little is done about it and doubtless most of the suspicions are unfounded.

The practice is usually attributed to a mother and daughter, especially if they have an unpleasant character, for the Kipsigis believe that the secrets connected with these activities are handed down in the female line. The Kipsigis also believe that a person may fall ill suddenly or even die in ignorance of the fact that he is being bewitched. The use of *kwombisik* is really a mild form of *panisiet*, but is referred to in a joking manner and is apparently no longer taken very seriously. *Kwombisiot* is a medicine made up of a mixture of substances, a chief ingredient of which is a roasted chameleon or a non-poisonous grass snake. This is used entirely on husbands with the intention of making them mild, so that they will not beat their wives. At the same time it has the effect of making them unfit for war, as they shiver with the least cold and cannot keep awake. As it does not make the victim really ill or cause his death, it is not classed as *panisiet*. A wife found guilty of such practices is sent home to her family, but her use of *kwombisiot* is often attributed to the machinations of the mother-in-law.

Panisiet may be summed up as being the practice which causes sickness or death by supernatural means in human beings, animals or crops. It would include the use of poison if such a method is in fact employed by the Kipsigis. It is the most hated of all things and there is no worse epithet to apply to a man or woman than *ponindet*. *Orgoinotet*, on the other hand, is not necessarily evil, but is usually so as far as the activities of the clan of Arap Koylegen are concerned. It is applied especially to a very few practitioners who claim to divine from words uttered by a gourd. This form of ventriloquism is properly a part of *sageyuwek*, which is an entirely beneficent form of supernatural power.

The practice of *sageyuwek* is chiefly concerned with the treatment of bodily ailments in the widest sense. It is very much more than a mere administration of medicines and charms, as bodily afflictions are believed in many cases to be due to some moral fault such as selfishness or unkindness, in somewhat the same manner as the curse is the punishment for infringements of the tribal law. Sickness in such cases is more than a punishment; it is also a warning given so that faults may be corrected. The chief function of the *Chebsageyot* is to seek the cause of the sickness or other trouble and to find the remedy. The treatment may not always involve the administration of medicine, but will entail some little ceremony and perhaps a prayer, the object of which is to help the patient to rectify the moral fault which is the indirect cause of the trouble. This attitude towards certain types of human ailment is not difficult to understand in view of Kipsigis ideas on the human spirit. The spirit, which is reincarnated again and again in the family, is as much interested in the welfare of the family as when it lived among them in bodily form. This interest may be shown by the spirit attempting to protect a member of the family against ill treatment. This may be achieved by causing the evil doer, oppressor or selfish one to become ill and so drawing his attention to the evil he has caused. The spirit appears in a vision to the *Chebsageyot* and tells her all the circumstances of the case and the steps to be taken to secure a remedy. The faculty of being able to receive communications from spirits is the basis of *sageyuwek*.

Although simple cases of sickness are treated by ordinary medicines and charms, an honest *Chebsageyot* will only treat cases of serious or prolonged sickness, if she believes she has had genuine instructions on the cases from a spirit of her client's family. A very common affliction to be brought to a *Chebsageyot* is the failure to have children. From the Kipsigis point of view it is quite plain that this affliction may sometimes be caused by the behaviour of a spirit. When a child is born the spirit of a deceased member of the family must come to the child, so no child can be born if the spirits are unwilling, or for some reason are unable, to come to the child. In such cases it is the *Chebsageyot's* role to find out why the spirit does not come and what the spirit wishes to be done, so that the barren woman may have the wished for child. The faculty of being able to communicate with spirits is possessed by a limited number of people, usually women. Often the practitioners are women who have been subject to fainting fits or who have the power of seeing visions. Such a woman undergoes certain ceremonies at the hands of an experienced *Chebsageyot*, partly to prevent the fainting fits and partly to be initiated into the formal practice. The novice is also instructed in the use of medicines and charms and the performance of the secret rites. Although communication with the spirits occurs in dreams and visions, the dreams are not of the ordinary kind (*Karuotitet*) but the special *Ngorset*. In *Ngorset* dreams, spirits appear, happenings taking place a long way away are re-enacted and visions foretelling the future are experienced. The clearest and best visitations occur in waking visions, that is when the *Chebsageyot* is sitting quietly undisturbed but awake. A *Chebsageyot* cannot, however, direct or control her faculty of reception, so that she cannot enquire into any particular case at will. Visions come only at their own accord and in their own time.

A routine procedure is followed at a consultation but this is merely the customary formality demanded by the clients, who would not be satisfied if it were omitted. The procedure has no connection at all with the visions, dreams or instructions, since these (if they have been received by the *Chebsageyot*) have been made manifest before the arrival of the client. Clients are usually women either on their own accord or as representatives of their husbands or brothers, who usually do not choose to consult a practitioner personally. Clients merely state they have come for a consultation, but do not describe the case or give any information. The *Chebsageyot* has to find out for herself who the client is and what is the substance of her trouble. The practitioner does not always know whether the visitor is the patient or merely a proxy for a relation. The client is not questioned directly by the *Chebsageyot*, who pours out on to a skin mat a small basketful of eleusine grain (about two pounds), which has been brought by the client. A cowrie shell from which the top has been cut off is placed on the heap of grain. The *Chebsageyot* takes the mat in both hands and throws the grain in the air with rapid dexterous movements similar to those used when winnowing. When the shell comes to rest again on the grain, she examines its position and notes the amount of grain (if any) lodged in its cavity. From these indications the *Chebsageyot* is supposed to read the case,

but she is so expert in the manipulation of the mat of grain that she can make it say what she wishes. Every time she manipulates the grain and shell she makes some statement about the client and her case. As the client merely agrees or dissents, the *Chebsageyot* has to feel her way until she discovers who the client is and whether she seeks a consultation for herself or for another. A reputable practitioner never undertakes a case unless she has already had information about it in a vision, and the manipulation procedure is undertaken solely to ascertain if the client is the person whose case has already been made known to the *Chebsageyot* by the spirits. While throwing the grain and shell, she relates such facts as she may know about the client, her family and circumstances to assure the visitor that she and her case are well known. The *Chebsageyot* proceeds to describe the trouble while the client assents or disagrees with the facts narrated and adds additional information as she becomes more confident that the case is known to the *Chebsageyot*. The *Chebsageyot* then proceeds to outline the treatment in the form in which she received it in her vision. She may sometimes add some medicine, charm or rite on her own initiative, but she avoids ordering the sacrifice of a sheep or goat or the preparation of beer, in order not to put her client to unnecessary trouble or expense. All practitioners naturally do not follow the same ethical standards and some are unconscientious enough to undertake cases of which they have had no previous intimation from the spirits. A few are callous regarding expense in the hope that the magnitude of the ceremonies they order will compensate for the paucity of their knowledge.

The client may have to return several times for treatment and, on occasions, the *Chebsageyot* goes herself to the client's house to carry out certain ceremonies. A *Chebsageyot* really does believe that she meets and converses with spirits and when she talks of them it is difficult to grasp at first whether she is talking of a person who is living or dead. She will also sometimes describe the appearance of a person who is dead and the cause of his death, as well as incidents in the family history. She does this so well that the deceased's relative is convinced that the *Chebsageyot* has received information through the spirits about people living in distant districts whom she has never known. The confidence of a stranger client, who comes from a distance for a consultation, is sometimes gained by a description of some of the contents of the client's house, down to the size and shape of the milk gourds and the arrangement of the cowries on them. After the better type of practitioner has had a vision, she waits confidently certain that a client will come for consultation in a few days. Some women dislike having dreams and visions and would dispense with them if they could, as they are trying experiences for the recipient. Visions seem more frequent when the *Chebsageyot* is not heavily engaged with household duties or agricultural work and when there is no sickness in the home.

Medicines, charms and amulets are of two kinds. *Kerichek* and *ketik* include medicines taken internally and charms worn on the person. Women and children, especially if they are subject to sickness, often wear dozens of small charms round their necks. The other class,

ndasimiet, is applied only to charms against animals, who attack people or who raid fields. The term *kericheck* is applied particularly to such medicines as are worn on the person, while *ketik* is applied more to those taken internally, but there seems to be no clear cut distinction between them. Medicines taken orally are made up from roots, herbs and seeds, from which decoctions or infusions are made. Many of them are powerful purgatives, some are dangerous and cause death occasionally when not properly administered. In the case of some of these powerful drugs, it is said that death will ensue, unless they are followed by much hot soup. The preparation and administration of medicines and charms is largely in the hands of the *Chebsageynik*, but most people treat simple ailments themselves with the advice of friends. Although the remedies for certain diseases are secrets known to a few people who keep the knowledge in the family, such specialists are always willing to put their knowledge at the disposal of the sick. It seems certain that some treatment for syphilis was known, as there is evidence that the Kipsigis suffered from this disease, but there are no signs of the conditions associated with its chronic form.

Another deadly disease for which the Kipsigis appear to have a remedy (or to have acquired a natural partial immunity) is anthrax, which is common in some of the grassland districts. If a sufferer from anthrax receives treatment at once, he usually recovers and it is considered unfortunate if more than one in ten dies. Those who recover are said to be immune to further attacks and there seems to be some reason to believe this is true. As soon as a person is suspected of having anthrax he is sent home immediately. On the way home if he is caught in the rain or wets his feet when crossing a stream, death is certain. A relation runs for the owner of the specific medicines, who brings them at once and instructs the parents in their use. The medicines are boiled and administered orally night and morning. The nurse (usually mother, father, brother or sister) chews some of the medicine for protection and washes the patient's boils or sores with it. Care is taken that no one touches the patient or anything the patient has touched. Small children are specially watched. The patient is not allowed to touch or eat from any utensils and he is given an old potsherd to spit in. The distinctive feature of the treatment is that no cold water must touch the patient and no water, milk or *musarek* be drunk by him. A little hot gruel (*rongorik*) is allowed to moisten the sufferer's lips. Foreign foods which are allowed are a little hot tea and non-juicy fruits such as custard apples. Banishment of moisture is driven to the extreme: no rain must fall on the vegetables after or while they are being gathered; sheep and goats must not get wet as they might shake themselves and sprinkle water on the patient. All the regulations against the use of water apply also to the nurse, who may drink no cold water, milk or beer during the whole period of the sickness. If the patient has not died, after about the fourth day recovery is certain. About the eighth or ninth day the sores harden and the treatment is stopped. After two weeks or so a little ceremonial beer is prepared, the patient is washed for the first time, his clothes are buried and he is allowed to meet people

normally again. There are two common names for anthrax, *Prasta* and *Kiptegoit*, neither of which may be used with regard to a person or animal stricken with the disease. Instead the word *kuserwet*, which is the name of a weed, is used. If a person enquires after a man suffering from the disease, the ordinary phrases (such as *mache kosop*, 'is he getting well') must not be used, but the stereotype question *mache kororach?*, is it coming out (or off)?' must be employed. This form of words has been taken from the expression used when speaking of the head of an axe coming off its haft.

Simple surgery is practised by many men without reward and not as a business. The replacing of dislocations and the setting of bones in splints are understood. Wounds are drawn together either with gut or by being held together by carefully placed thorns. In these cases the juices of certain plants are used externally and may have some slight effect in preventing septic post operative conditions.

A form of divination of little importance is practised by means of the *parbarek*, a number of smooth round pebbles housed in a small bamboo cylinder. Their use seems to be confined to men and is not very common. The operator shakes the tube of pebbles and pours them out like dice. From the position of the stones the information sought is supposed to be obtained. Like the mat of grain and the cowrie shell of the *Chebsageynik*, it is merely a device for conveying the opinions of the practitioner. The object is usually to obtain news of someone whose absence is causing uneasiness or the whereabouts of missing stock. As the practice is not classed with the activities of *sageyuwek*, it is probable that it is not connected with communications from the spirit world. It does not command general esteem like *sageyuwek*, but those who make a trial of it often express themselves as being surprised at the correctness of the information received.

APPENDIX 16: The Curse.
17: Examples of Witchcraft.
18: Examples of Sageyuwek.

APPENDIX I

TABLE OF AGE SETS (IPINWEK) (*see Chapter IV*)

Age Set	*Sub Set names*		*Date*
Maina			1775-1796
Chuma			1796-1817
Sawe			1817-1838
Kerongoro	Kiptoymen		1838-1859
	Kiptormesendet		
	Kipelgot		
	Kimarere (minor)	(Comet 1858)	
Kablelach	Kipalayeng		1859-1880
	Kimutaywet		
	Masiba		
	Kebebuja (minor)		
Kimnyige	Kipsilchoget	(Comet 1882)	1880-1901
	Tabariit		
	Kiptilosiek or Chebtechoret		
	Kiptilgarit (minor)		1901
Nyonge	Kosigo		1901-1922
	Kipsirgot	(Halley's comet 1910)	
	Kimelsiagit (minor)		
	'Blu'		1916
	Mesyewa (minor)		1922
Maina	'Shilling'		1923
	Silobay		1929

Some comets, which are remembered by the old men as being especially propitious omens for waging war, seem to agree fairly well with an average generation of twenty-one years. A very conspicuous comet, which was visible in the early morning in the east between the morning star and the horizon, is remembered to have coincided with the Kipalayeng going to initiation; there was a large comet in 1858. One, which is less definitely remembered, occurred in the Masiba period; this may have been the comet of 1882. Halley's comet of 1910 coincides with the coming out of the Kipsirgot.

APPENDIX II

CLAN CHANTS (*see Chapter IV*)

The *Konganyot* clans (totem: crested crane): *A po kobar iit; kabarta tuga sos si kobarta nyegeywek'*. The literal translation is: 'I belong they destroy (slit) ears; they destroy (slit) for cattle palm leaves; so that they destroy *nyegeywek*'. The meaning is that the crest of the crane is similar to the slit ears of cattle and the palm fronds; the ears of cattle are sometimes slit into strips for identification. The meaning of *nyegeywek* is unknown. There are two clans with this totem: *Kapchamagondek and Kapsutayek* (both place names). Both clans are sometimes called *Kabarut*, from *bar*, the verb in the chant.

The *Peliot* clan (totem: elephant): *Kipo kapongen: kiram kel, koee moi; kipo mouny iit uny kelda*. The literal translation is: 'We belong to the great one, one scoops up foot, they drink calves; we belong they do not hide ears, they hide tooth.' The meaning is that water is scooped up from the huge footprints of

elephants for the calves to drink. The huge ears hide the elephant's tusks. *Ongenyot* is used in ordinary speech as a name for large bull elephants. There are three (possibly four) clans who share this totem: *Kabarangwek, Kapkitolil* and *Kapkoytim;* they all use chant nicknames, such as *Ongen, Kapongen* and *Kiramgel.*

APPENDIX III

HYENA TALES (*see Chapter V*)

A VISIT TO THE NETHER WORLD. A man once speared a hyena but failed to retrieve his spear, which the animal carried away down its hole. When he returned home, his friend, with whom he had exchanged spears in accordance with a common Kipsigis custom, demanded that the spear be retrieved as it was a particularly good one. So the man returned to the hole, into which the hyena had disappeared, and followed it down until at last he reached the spirit world. He was astonished to see people there just like himself, including some from his own clan who welcomed him, saying: "Where have you come from?" When they asked him what he was seeking, he told them how he had speared a hyena and followed it to retrieve his spear. "Hush", they said, "do you not see that he is there? Look at the wound in his side." He looked and saw it was a man they were pointing out to him. It was the beginning of harvest in the spirit world, for they were shelling fresh yellow grain. His relations prepared him some food from the fresh grain and returned him his spear, which had got bent. They led him out by a different way from that by which he had come down and said: "Climb up here". He climbed up and found himself right at his home, where he told them all round the beer pot how the spirit world was very like this world, with people, cattle, goats, children and fields.

RAISED FROM THE DEAD. The old people used to tell us long ago of the widow who was the mother of eight sons. War broke out and one of the sons old [illegible]ed; again they made war and another was killed and so on until only the was kill[illegible]s left. He in his time went to war and when the warriors returned, youngest was [illegible]ed them where her son was. They replied: "He is coming the old woman as[illegible] did not like to tell her that he had been killed. When she but is behind", as they [illegible] the same reply, she knew they were not telling her the asked again and received [illegible]h of her son and took a rope with her, saying: "If truth. So she went in searc[illegible] so that he will not die alone." She searched every- he is dead, I will hang myself [illegible] until at last she found that of her son. She sat where and passed many bodies down and clasped his body to her.

It was late at night and the hyenas began to arrive and to ask one another: "Where is Kopchebanyin"?, for so they called this man as all his brothers were dead. When they found his body they called their elder, Kokomondoe, and said "Taste him for us."

If there is an elder in a house at meal times, it is customary for him to taste the food first before the younger people eat, even though he does not himself partake of the meal. But when Kokomondoe arrived the mother said to him: "You shall not taste this one this time. Why have you finished all my sons? If only you had left me just one." She threw the rope she had brought round Kokomondoe's neck.

He said: "Don't tie me and I will raise your son for you. But if I raise him you will go and tell people I made your dead son live."

"No", replied the woman, "I will say nothing."

He told her to move out of the way and came and sat down and closed all the wounds. Then he smacked the body and asked the mother what his name was. When she told him, he raised the head so that the man sat up and held him so that he should not fall, for he was as if drunk. Kokomondoe then asked him who he was and he replied: "I am so and so."

"Who is this?" asked Kokomondoe.

"My mother", he replied.

"Where are you?" asked Kokomondoe.

"I don't know", was the reply for the man was still confused.

The mother ran and embraced her son and said: "Thank God for my only child."

"Who brought you to life?" then asked Kokomondoe.

"How should I know", was the reply.

"I did", said the hyena, "but when you reach home do not say so".

"I will not tell", he replied.

"That is not true. You will."

After the warrior had sworn he would not tell, the hyena told him not to boast of it because if he did he would die.

Then the mother said: "If I find he is really alive, he shall not go to war again."

"Let him go to war", replied the hyena, no one will be able to kill him." The hyenas went with the mother and her son to their home and then left them.

The son went to war continually but no one could kill him. He always came back with cattle for his mother and he married four wives who bore him many children. At last he became an old man and could no longer go to war. When he was very old, his grandchildren and their children used to lead him about as he could no longer go alone. One day he was drinking beer with his sons, when the guests became noisy as they vied with each other in boasting of their exploits and in telling stories of the cattle they had captured.

At last the old man said: "Be quiet while I also speak. If the hyena had not raised me from the dead, where should I be now?" At once the old wounds burst open, the blood flowed and his bowels gushed out so that he died where he sat.

Appendix IV

A FAMILY SACRIFICE AND PRAYER (*see Chapter V*)

A young woman had been married three years but had borne no child, although all manner of medicines had been tried without result. In the family it had been hoped that when the young wife had a baby, the spirit of her husband's father or mother would come to the child. Several women considered to be wise on such matters had been consulted, including a *Chebsageyot* who was a great friend of the family but no relation. She had had a vision in which the father's spirit had told her that he would like to meet his daughter (not the daughter-in-law) and that one of his sheep or goats was to be sacrificed. Search was made for such a sheep or goat and with great difficulty one was found, for it was eighteen years since the man had died and sickness had killed off nearly all the descendants of his flock.

The ceremony was to be carried out in the early morning in the home of the spirit's daughter-in-law. The spirit's daughter was to take his two grandchildren (her nephews) over to the house where the ceremony was to be held. On the evening before the ceremony, the spirit's daughter, a woman twenty-seven years old, showed suppressed excitement at the thought of going to meet her father, of whom she had been very fond.

The daughter and her two nephews went off to the ceremony at sunrise. The only other people present were the spirit's son and his two wives, one of whom was the young woman for whose pregnancy the ceremony was being held. Just after sunrise the son sacrificed a young he-goat—a function which can only be performed by a man—on the west of the *mabwaita* with the head facing the east. The family sat on the west of the sacrifice and faced the east. From the goat's skin small strips were cut to form *tomogik*, one for the spirit father and one for every participant. The women wore the rings on the wrist and the men and boys on the finger. Members of the spirit's clan wore them on the right hand and those of his wife's original clan on the left. Small pieces of meat were cut from the sacrifice and put in a half gourd, not in the usual meat dish. The pieces, which were little more than a cubic inch each, were cut one from the heart, the liver, the stomach, the intestine, the tongue, the ribs and, as it was a

male spirit, from the hind leg. (If the spirit had been a female this piece would have been cut from the fore leg.) A similar portion was placed in another gourd for the spirit's wife as she was also dead. The two gourds were then placed in the grass to the east of the *mabwaita*, outside the *piut* or cleared space.

While this was being done the following prayers were said: *Asista nenyon, kagetorochin*; *konech sopon, konech pitatet*. "Our God, we have come to meet you; give us health and well being, give us fertility" (referring to the young wife.) The spirits of the husband's father and mother were then addressed: *Kagetorochak*. The word *toroch* means to go towards a friend, whom one has not seen for some time, to greet him; or to go half way towards someone to help him with a load. It always has a connotation of mutual help and mutual happiness. In the present context it implies the assumption that God and the spirits of one's friends gladly meet one half way. *Matonyalilech. Obwan komye*. "We have come to meet you. Do not be unkind to us. Come to us as we wish."

The predominating feeling at the gathering was one of affectionate remembrance of a loved parent. Though the mother died when her two children, who were present on this occasion, were too young to remember, yet she was thought of with affection, for it was said that she was a woman who was much loved. Her husband never recovered from his sorrow at her death but committed suicide from grief.

Appendix V

THE CHEMOSIT (*see Chapter V*)

The following description was given by an old Kipsigis: "When I was a young man we were making war on the Masai beyond the Amala River. There is a big hill in that country, where it is very cold as the clouds always hang low on the mountain. Even if we were very hungry, it was not our custom to spend a night near that hill, as it was known as a bad place for dangerous animals. One one occasion we spent a night there by the river when the moon was young. I looked across the river and saw an animal like a tree. It came across the river, snatched one of our men and pushed him into the river. Its head was not very long and not very short but it had enormous whiskers. (*Wawechik*, the name for whiskers on animals and insects but not on men.) Its back was like that of a man, but on its sides it had long dark brown hair. It had only one leg, but no arms for it was an animal. We saw its spoor in the morning and it was bigger than that of a rhinoceros. When it made water the whole place stank. These animals at one time also lived at Mabase and Musore in Kipsigis country near the river called Chemosit."

Appendix VI

KIPSIGIS TALES (*see Chapter VI*)

Two friends were discussing the ill-behaviour of their wives; one was in favour of beating them and the other against it. Finally they each agreed to beat his wife if the other would do so too. They went home to their respective houses which were not far apart. One of the men began to beat an ox skin vigorously. When the other heard this he thought the sound came from his friend beating his wife in her skins, and so he proceeded to seize a stick and beat his wife.

* * *

The tale: *Ketayge makat ok sootoon*, literally 'one twists together the (sheep) skins and the gourds', describes how a man was made a fool of and how he returned the compliment. A man had cut off the thin stalk end of a gourd and was extracting the dry but clinging seeds through the small hole he had made with the aid of a palm frond midrib. When his friend saw him attempting un-

successfully to extract the seeds in this way, he said: "You will never get the seeds out like that. You had better cut off the bottom and then you will be able to push the seeds out with a stick." It was not until he had cut off the bottom that he realised he had beeen made a fool of and the milk gourd had been spoiled.

Another time when the two friends met, the joker of the former encounter was killing a sheep. He had slit it up on the underside in the usual way, but seemed at a loss how to get the skin off. His friend advised him to cut it down the back so that it would come off easily. When he had done so, the man who was skinning the sheep lifted up the two pieces and said: "What sort of a skin is that?"

* * *

Two men, Imam and Tengek, were benighted on a journey and were compelled to sleep out. "Let us lie down here and sleep", said Imam.

"Not I," said his companion, "I will sleep up this tree so that the wild animals cannot attack me."

"You are very foolish," replied Imam, "if you fall asleep, or the wind blows, you will fall out of the tree."

And so it happened. In the night Tengek fell out of the tree and was killed. Since then everyone prefers to speak the truth like Imam and so *Imam* has come to mean truth and *Tengek* falsehood.

* * *

The phrase *Mokeloot ndara* ('it is useless to regret the might have been') well sums up the philosophical attitude of the Kipsigis. When the war call was heard giving warning of a surprise attack by the enemy, all the people ran off except one man who thought it was a false alarm. When he was speared, he began to say: *Ndara kongen . . .*, 'If I had known . . .'. More commonly expressed as *Nda kakaanay* or *Ndaka ongen*; *ra* is occasionally substituted for the verb prefix *ka*. And so the Kipsigis say *Mokeloot ndara*, which means as nearly literally as possible 'One does not award to the if-one-had'.

Another version of the tale is more circumstantial, but loses point by not giving the derivation of the word *ndara*. When the call giving warning of a Masai attack was heard, a woman was cooking some meat from a fat ox, which was part of her daughter's marriage cattle. "I shall stay", said she, "I cannot go away and leave this fat meat of my daughter's ox for the enemy." So she smeared herself with the blood of the ox, threw herself on the floor by the door, spread some of the entrails of the ox across her stomach and feigned death. When the Masai entered the hut they imagined she was dead. But just as they were going they thought it was unusual to find a woman killed, so one of them took some soup from the pot on the fire and poured it into the woman's ear. She jumped up with a yell and said, *Nda kan kitee kemwei . . .*, 'If when they had warned one, one had run away . . .' This phrase is also occasionally used as a proverb, but the greater popularity of *Mokeloot ndara* is shown by the fact that over the years *ndara* has become a noun.

* * *

The following fairy story is told to children of all ages. Tarit arose and went forth and came to a poor man's house, outside which was sitting a beautiful girl. "You look hungry, my child," said Tarit, "surely you are starving. Come with me to my home."

But the girl replied "No, I will not come."

"But," said Tarit, "my father is rich and we have many granaries." At last he persuaded her to agree. "Take this path and wait for me when you come to the middle of a great plain."

When the girl came to the place, she looked about and was lonely as there was no house to be seen and no one about.

Presently she heard a voice singing: "Don't cry Chesunguny, don't cry. I shall not let you get lost. I will lead you to my home where you will see my mother and father and our cattle. Let us go on Chesunguny, let us go to my home." Chesunguny was astonished for she could see no one, but the voice seemed to come from a little bird perched on a thorn tree.

She felt happier now and went on again. After going a long way across another plain, she met a man who spoke to her. As they chatted she told him how she had heard a man speaking to her, when she was in the middle of a lonely plain.

"I was very troubled," she said, "because there was no one there and no houses and no path across the plain. But the voice said: 'Don't cry, come home with me'. I could only see a bird on a *sertwet* tree and I was astonished."

"Where are you going," asked the stranger, "and may I take you there?"

"I am going to the house of a friend, but I do not know his name", she said, "I will go on alone as he said he would meet me on the way."

So she went on alone and as she approached a cattle boma towards evening, her friend Tarit came out to meet her. He took her in at once and gave her food, which he had already prepared. But this was not yet his home which was still a day's journey further. Meanwhile Tarit had flown home and told his mother to prepare lots of good food.

"Take care of Chesunguny and don't harm her," said his mother.

In the morning Tarit told Chesunguny the way and she started alone, as Tarit was only a man when he was in a house, but when he went out he would disappear into the bush, so that no one saw him change into a bird.

At last she arrived at her friend's home, where his mother did everything for her and kept her in the house and fed her well until she became strong and beautiful. When Tarit flew back to console her mother and father, he found her mother crying so he sang to her, "Don't cry, mother-in-law, Chesunguny is well."

"When she came outside she could only see a little bird but she heard the voice of a man. So she thought: "Chesunugny must be dead and her spirit is singing to me."

So Tarit sang again: "Chesunguny is not dead, she is at my home with my mother. Don't cry *Pamoru* (sister-in-law). Chesunguny is at my house, at home with my mother, who is looking after her well. Tell *Pamongun* (father-in-law) Chesunguny is well, as I don't want *Pamongun* to grieve." Tarit could not appear as a man as he was afraid Chesunguny's father might kill him for taking away his daughter.

Soon Chesunguny went to the initiation and Tarit flew off again to tell her father. He did not dare say that he had taken her himself to the initiation, so he said he had seen her going. "Take me and show me where she is and I will give you two cows", said the poor father.

"No," said the mother, "let us give him three."

"Let us go," replied Tarit, "I will lead you", but he thought to himself: "I wonder if he will kill me." He showed the father the path to take and Tarit excused himself saying: "I have a debt to pay but will meet you at a place on the way." Turning down another path, Tarit changed into a bird and flew away. The father had to go on alone, as Tarit walked lame and must always change into a bird when away from habitations. The two met later as arranged and slept the night. In the morning Tarit set the old man on the path and flew home to make arrangements for his reception.

When the old man arrived at Tarit's home, Chesunguny was hidden away at first while her father was given food. Presently they called Chesunguny but she had grown so big and strong that the father did not recognise her and said: "This is not my daughter."

But Chesunguny replied: "Indeed I am. Do not look for me elsewhere!"

At last the father looked at her carefully and knew her again. Although the old man was overjoyed at seeing her again, they could not shake hands and greet one another as the girl's mother had been grieving. In the morning a ram was sacrificed and, as the auspices were good, they all anointed one another on the forehead and shook hands all round. Tarit then made his proposal of marriage

to the father, who turned to his daughter and said: "Come home with me."

But Chesunguny said she would not go.

Tarit offered the old man ten head of cattle, six more than the normal bride wealth, for he was very rich.

"I cannot take all those cattle home," said the father, "for it is very far." When at last he had been persuaded to agree to his daughter's marriage, he went home and brought his wife to be near her daughter as he liked the country well.

When narrated by the faint firelight, with the children silent but eagerly listening, in the quaint musical voice in which the tale is told and with the almost plaintive, coaxing singing of the bird, this story induces a feeling of peace and kindliness, which it is impossible to bring out in the translated and written word.

Appendix VII

SALANIK (*see Chapter VII*)

Salanik of *Taplitgoy: Kiplitgoy tabusuryo ok chorua; tapkowaal Kipsyeban ok Kitony; tapsorchin koyet Naikuru: sigowaal kametap Kiposes menye tuyopeek.* Kiplitgoy (the warrior's nickname) fell quarrelling with his friend; he claimed *Kipsyeban* and *Kitony* (cattle names); sought for them at the battle at Nakuru; then he claimed the mother of Kiposes living at the river junction.

Tapwogo kotiok no, sigotiach Chebusyen. 'He went into the house, untied the goats and untied *Chebusyen* (a goat).'

Taplunguny luget en Toogat; sigogur sigiriet Elikyo: Tubusuryo surtos ok choruet Arap Barsombet; suryechin Kiworut ok Lelgoot. 'They manoeuvred to give battle in Toogat; but the donkeys brayed (gave warning) at Elikyo; Kibusuryo quarrelled with his friend Arap Barsombet; they quarrelled about *Kiworut* and *Lelgoot* (cattle names).'

Salanik of *Taputcheboluny*: *Kibutcheboluny tabaroon kot kogaan en Mombwa; sigoik kapyugoy. Taptonon korobon ngotit pei; tamirgoy kot koru ainapgut; sikole kob'ano tuga? Kole: Kaba tuga Kabunech, ule tenamuren geny. Taprorot Keinges.* Kibutcheboluny (the warrior's *salaniat* meaning 'fell the coward with the swollen stomach') slaughtered them while on trek until he married into Mombwa; so that they became his family by marriage. Kiptonon it rained on his spear water; they cut up the cattle round up till they slept on the river bank; and then they said: 'Where have the cattle gone to?' They said 'The cattle went to Kabunec, where there are still many warriors as of old;' He killed one to the right and one to the left *Keinges* (meaning unknown).

Appendix VIII

AN EVENING SCENE (*see Chapter VIII*)

In the centre of a ring of flickering firelight a great round black pot is on the fire between a trough of upturned flat stones. Stirring the contents of the pot is a young woman, naked to the waist except for chain and wire ornaments, which shine brightly in the firelight. As she thrusts and pounds with outstretched arms, lithe strength is visible beneath the smooth lustrous copper-brown skin. On the other side of the fire sit young girls of all ages in a semi-circle, their necks laden with blue, white and green bead necklaces which hang down to their waists. Their white teeth gleam here and there as they chaff one another in whispers. Dimly and fitfully visible below the fireplace is a group of smaller boys, patiently hungry. In the intervals of dead silence, the damp firewood hisses and ever changing lines of glowing carbon sparks creep over the surface of the great black pot, like grass fires on a distant hillside. The steady munch, munch of the ruminating goats, which are tied round the walls so as to be visible faintly on the outer edge of the circle of fire-light, can be heard as a monotonous background accompaniment. Close overhead are

the attic poles, shiny black with continual smoke. A tiny kid frisks right on to the firestones, but is quickly rescued by a child and taken back to its bleating mother.

The house mother calls for *kerebeita, keskesik* and *segetiet*. When the food is ready it is poured out, some for the husband, who is still delayed at the cattle milking, in his own *kesiet*; some for the morning in another *kesiet* and the rest on to skin mats to be cut up with the wooden knife into sections to cool a little. The big stirrer is handed to a child who scrapes off and eats the adhering food. The children sit round in two groups, with a plate of *kimiet* and a dish of stew in the middle of each group. They dip their slices of *kimiet* into the soup and eat silently. One fishes out a lump of meat and holds it out to a comrade, who takes hold of it with finger and thumb, cuts off a small piece and then passes it on to the others. While there is still plenty left, the visiting children rise saying: "I have had enough." The house mother and her children press them to more. "Nonsense, children, what's the matter with you? Eat all you can!" Then the elder children rise leaving the younger ones to finish saying: "Carry on, children. You have not had enough yet!" Even the younger ones do not finish all the food and the mother busies herself cleaning up, while the children fade away.

Presently singing is heard outside, at first tentatively and then rising to full voice. The child who leads usually improvises words to a standard tune and is accompanied by a low chorus, which at the end of each verse bursts into the full chorus refrain. The leader is changed from time to time without a break in the singing. The children stand in the cold moonlight, shoulder to shoulder in a circle or in two lines facing one another, and dance from their knees upwards in time to the music and sway their bodies and heads in unison, as they put all their energy into the singing and dancing. When the house mother comes out to teach them to sing properly, she is greeted with joy and shy laughter over their mistakes. After an hour or so the children vanish into the darkness, some to their homes, some to neighbouring houses and some back into the house, where they chatter over the fire and then nestle together in a row on a great ox skin to fall asleep in a twinkling.

Appendix IX

RIDDLES (TANGUCHIK) (*see Chapter VIII*)

Usaus Keyo? Tabnet! 'Swing about Keyo? Chin (or goat's beard). '*Usaus* a verb, which is rarely used today, means 'to swing about as if about to fall' and is a word no child would know.

Kirginyun kipkeleny tilwa? Pobat. 'My bull (called) *kilpkeleny* at the hill? Edible mushroom.' This is a play on the double meaning of *keleny*. It means (a) to return to the original owner a beast which has been lent round to other members of the clan; and to give back the goat or sheep received for the board and lodging of an initiation candidate, which is done in cases of poverty; or (b) to prise up the earth without turning it over. The first meaning applies to the bull and the second to the mushroom, which pushes up through the earth and makes a little mound. Perhaps the underlying idea is that a mushroom, which has no seed, is eaten and disappears; later another mushroom is found which has come from nowhere.

Kiguyguyon poyon en Terik? Chebutiet 'Crawled about the old man in Terik? The poisonous hairy caterpillar.' This is said to be a reference to the burning of the old men in a grass fire during the migration of the Kipsigis from To (see p. 5). It is said that children were told it took place in Terik, because the Kipsigis were ashamed of the truth. The hairy caterpillar is poisonous or *ngwan*, and the frequent burning of children in the fire is attributed to this incident, which further indicates that it was *ngwan*.

There are many simple ones: *Ibune oret ne chabay anan ibune ne singortot? Ne chabay.* 'Will you take the slippery path or will you take the rough (non slippery) one? The slippery.' The path leading to cattle (wealth) is slippery, but the path trodden only by wild animals is not slippery, is easy to walk on but leads nowhere.

APPENDIX X

INITIATION SONGS (*see Chapter IX*)

The *Kipayesit: Kipayes: Tiondap payeso. Longo lel; tiondap payeso. Kaplim, osaisac tugap Kabugar. Kabugar, osaisac tugap Kaplim.* The literal translation makes little sense, as all meaning seems to have been lost. 'He of the *payesit*; the animal of the *payesit*. The white shield; the animal of the *payesit*. Land of Kaplim, drive up for capture the cattle of Kabugar. Land of Kabugar, drive up for capture the cattle of Kaplim.' The meaning of the stem *payes* is unknown, but it might be connected with *aesit*—idiot. *Kabugar* is probably some district. *Kaplim* today means the Kavirondo country, but it is probable that in this ancient song it refers to the country of the uncircumcised in general. *Tiondo* (animal) may perhaps refer to a totem.

The *Chelimen* (the girls' song): *Chelimen, Yatyin tugyok limu. Kipgorin eyto ap Tumbelyon.* '*Chelimen*, open the gate for our cattle (to go) to the morning grazing. *Kipgorin* is the ox of *Tumbelyon*.'

The above two songs are unchangeable but in *Kandaet*, though old, stereotyped and sometimes unintelligible words and phrases are used, words in praise of any person or thing may be improvised by the singer.

Keteche chebioset ok chemnagay. (Song to one's mother.) 'One respects the old woman and the wearer of the *nagayet*.' *Tech* is translated 'respect', but it is much kinder and broader than that. *Chebioset* means 'old woman', but it is a term of great respect. *Nagayet* is the necklace worn by mothers (other than those of the 'Nandi' clans) when their children go to initiation.

Subayandet Kaplelkok e Ngbob. (A song to men.) *Subay* is the greeting to boys though in Masai it is used to men as well; here, with the termination *andet*, it is used to men. *Kaplelkok*, 'the place of the white *kokwet*', is said to refer to the white chips made by initiates when they are fashioning *malingotik* (see p. 62). *Ngbob* is unknown and is perhaps the name of a district.

Keteche tugul koboto motiriot, 'We respect all especially the *motiriot*.'

Solu Masop ! tue robta !, 'Glorious *Masop* (highlands), (where) the rain is black!' The noun *soluet* means a thing of perfect quality or superlative in its appropriate qualities.

Solu Masop, tue lakwet e rorok ! 'Glorious *Masop*, (where the child is black in pure liquid honey without comb and rubbish.)' that is where children smother themselves with honey which collects all the dirt.

Solu Masop ! Kikwar ket, kikwarta tany korom. 'Glorious *Masop*! One ties the tree as one ties the legs of a fierce cow.' Poles are tied to trees, in which honey barrels are placed, so that honey takers can climb up them. Honey is good and plentiful in the highlands.

Solu Masop ! Siim anwet ok moing, 'They sing for joy (as we hoist it) the rope and the honey barrel.' *Siim* is the word used to denote the prolonged high quavering note *iriririri*, by which Kipsigis express joy on ceremonial occasions.

Solu Masop ! Chee aiywet ok koal tany. 'The axe resounds and we buy stock.' Honey boxes are made with axes and with honey, sheep, goats and cattle can be bought. *Tany* includes sheep and goats as well as cattle.

Solu Masop ! Melel tion; melel pumutiot ! 'Glorious Masop! thirsty is the animal, thirsty is the stranger!' The bamboos in the forest contain water, but the stranger does not know this. The reference to the animal is obscure (unless it means that they too are unaware of the store of water in the bamboo) and the reason for praising this thirst.

Solu Waldai ! Chemnyo peek. 'Glorious *Waldai* (lowlands) where the grain ripens early.'

APPENDIX XI

THE CHEPKETILET SONG (*see Chapter IX*)

The following are examples of some of the sentences used in the *Chepketilet*

song. The language is archaic and the words are so run together as to be sometimes unintelligible.

1. *Kibo tegandet! Saptenyon koil met komisyi mongasis.* We belong to the bamboo! Our podocarpus tree when it breaks, the crown will disappear in 'the eye of the sun' (the sunrise, the East).
2. *Toror tegek mokinyoru.*
   The bamboos are so tall one cannot get to the top.
3. *Tai teget koilong* (*tech teget ko u longet*).
   Present the chest like a shield.
4. *Tai teget korum pun.*
   Present the chest and kill the enemy. (*rum* no longer means kill an enemy, but kill a Kipsigis only.)
5. *Parbar kot kwo orit pun.*
   Twirl the spear to pierce the enemy.
6. *Kecham keter kel e mungen.*
   One likes the eaves on the legs with fur anklets. (Refers to the anklets worn with war dress, which are likened to the eaves of a house.)
7. *Kecham urwo met en songol.*
   One likes the shade over the head with ostrich feathers. (the war headdress.)
8. *Kecham ko see ma ok piun.*
   One likes to make fire with the fire sticks. (*See* for *set*, 'make war'. Fire is made in this way in war, where there are no house fires from which to obtain a light; so that lighting a fire with the firesticks is a circumlocution for waging war.
9. *Kecham kosam kel e ngurur.*
   One likes to colour the leg on reconnaissance. (i.e. get covered with mud following enemy spoor.)
10. *Aiywet che mobek; kito begu; kongee roor.*
    The axe which is not lost; it was being lost; the old field gets up. (*Kongee* seems to stand for *Konget*, 'get up' and not 'be tired'. This might mean that when an axe gets old, it is not thrown away but resharpened. The Kipsigis interpretation of this sentence is that one age set goes to initiation, grows up and then their children go to initiation; in turn the children of that age set go to initiation and so on, as an axe is continually being resharpened.)
11. *Solu koita tue nyeb Silibwa.*
    Praise the black stone near the *Silibwet* tree (district, hill, or other feature. This refers to something now quite forgotten which took place in some country previously occupied by the Kipsigis.)

The words in the above examples have been separated and a literal translation made. In the *Chepkerilet*, the *Kaandaet* and the *Tanguchik* riddles, the archaic language is very imperfectly understood by the people themselves. Even in present day curses and blessings the language used is not the same as that employed in ordinary parlance.

Appendix XII

A RUNAWAY MARRIAGE (*see Chapter XI*)

Tafutayn was no beauty but a merry, plump little girl, one of half-a-dozen *kipkelelik* from a certain neighbourhood. Just before she and the girls who were with her (*posoywek*) were to come forth from their seven months' semi-seclusion, the question of her marriage arose, as is customary at that time. As both her father and mother were dead and she had only a small brother twelve years old, there was nobody to look after her and see that she got a good husband, except a cousin, Arap Matooe, who was not at all fond of her. He intended to give her in marriage to one of his own friends, Arap Mursoi, a rich but bad-tempered man who had already married three wives, two of whom had run away. But Tafutayn, who knew of this man, steadily refused to consent to his marrying her, so that Arap Matooe became very angry. The girl's sister-in-law (*kamati*) also took the side of Arap Matooe, who really only cared about being sure of

the marriage cattle. His motives were perhaps not entirely selfish, as the marriage cattle would not be his, though he would have the custody of them during the minority of Tafutayn's young brother.

Tafutayn went to her initiation mother, who was a good woman and much concerned about the happiness of her 'Godchildren'. Tafutayn said to her: "*Iyoo*, do not worry; I am not afraid. Arap Matooe and my *kamati* cannot make me go to that man or any other as I have made up my mind to go to the house of your brother, for he will love me as you do and I know that his young wife is happy and wants me as her *siet* (co-wife). I know he has not the cattle for the marriage gift, but that does not matter as my brother is still very small and, before he is grown up, we shall have plenty of cattle."

Her *iyoo* promised to help her in every way, but the cousin was obdurate and told his friend, Arap Mursoi, to come next day to his house and settle the matter out of hand, by entering *Njor*, in the presence of his future wife and her relations. (The girl was still wearing the initiation veil and had not yet come forth from the initiation, so that she could not yet be claimed by the performance of the first marriage ceremony.) Tafutayn got to know of his intention and said to her sister-in-law: "Kamati, it is no use! If he marries me I shall run away, so let us run and hide in my *iyoo*'s house, so that the ceremony cannot take place."

Seeing Tafutayn had made up her mind, her sister-in-law went away with her.

This made Arap Matooe angrier than ever and, when they returned next day, he determined to give her to another man instead of to Arap Mursoi.

Tafutayn was becoming desperate so she decided on a cunning, if pardonably unscrupulous, expedient, "You are too late," she said, "as Arap Mibe, my *iyoo*'s brother, has already taken me by secret betrothal."

"That cannot be true," replied Arap Matooe, "as you still wear the veil and you know it is not permissible for you to become betrothed with the veil on."

"Indeed I know that," she said, "so I discarded my initiation clothes and borrowed my *iyoo*'s garments and marriage ornaments for the occasion."

All this was a fabrication but it convinced her cousin for the time, and Tafutayn ran to her *iyoo*'s house, three miles away, to tell her about it. As she wanted her god-child to live near her, the *iyoo* was delighted and also because it excused her from the ordeal of having to go herself to Arap Matooe to solicit his ward for her brother's wife. This would have been her duty as there was no other near relation to undertake it. She knew he would have refused her proposal, but now that the rumour of the secret betrothal was spread abroad, he could no longer refuse, but must allow the marriage cattle to be paid up slowly during the minority of the bride's brother.

Although he very much wanted Tafutayn, Arap Mibe was not so easy in his mind as he had not the initiative to become secretly betrothed. He was an honest fellow, who did not care to go and lie deliberately and he knew he had not the cattle to set about the marriage in the usual way. He also knew that secret betrothal was a dangerous expedient not lightly to be resorted to, for if the lover were discovered he might get a spear thrust instead of a bride.

As ill-fortune would have it, when Arap Mibe was going to a distant district to buy a cow, he was pointed out to Arap Matooe, who came up to him and said: "I am angry with you."

"What is the matter?" replied Arap Mibe.

"Is it true," asked Arap Matooe, "that you have stolen my cousin?"

Arap Mibe, slow of tongue and always unready in an emergency, answered: "No."

"But my cousin told me that certainly you had," said Arap Matooe.

"Well, then, why should I deny it?" replied Arap Mibe, as he slowly realised he must sacrifice the truth for his future wife. He hastily cut short the unfortunate meeting and went on his way to buy his cow.

When he arrived home with his purchase he was greeted with laughter, as in his agitation he had bought a barren cow. Poor, slow but kind-hearted fellow, he laughed heartily at himself, but his sister said: "Nothing matters now for all is arranged happily and anyway they will exchange the cow for a good one" (for such used to be the custom in the old days).

To prevent further deception, it had been decided by the women that

Tafutayn's lie must be made truth, by Arap Mibe carrying out the first marriage ceremony in a sketchy manner.

Late that night he came to a house near his sister's—it could not be her house as that was the house of initiation—accompanied by a friend as witness or best man. He brought the indispensable *segutiet* grass, with which the wrists of the bride and bridegroom are tied as with bracelets. To overcome the difficulty of the illegality of a marriage performed during initiation, the *menekobeet* clothes were discarded for half-an-hour and Tafutayn wore her *iyoo*'s clothes and ornaments. In this way, she was irrevocably married before two witnesses, one on her behalf and one on behalf of the bridegroom, so that it was now useless for her relations to protest and their anger would gradually subside.

One difficulty remained: the *kipkelelik* were about to come forth from the initiation amidst ceremonies and rejoicings, at which not only their relations but half the district would be present. Arap Matooe, who was still very angry, swore that if he met Arap Mibe he would beat him and an old woman swore she would beat the girl. So the only thing was for Arap Mibe, at the risk of being thought a coward, to stay away from the ceremonies, since if a fight occurred and blood was drawn from a member of the girl's clan, the marriage would be void. Great respect must always be given to one's wife's clan and if blood were drawn at the festivities, it would be *mumek* (see p. 26), that is something impossibly horrible. Arap Mibe's sister, who was fearless and tactful, went to the ceremonies, at which she was one of the principals. The cold, dignified, almost bored way, in which she received the wrath of two women of the aggrieved clan, ensured that no violence ensued. She was in no danger herself, as no man may lay hands upon a woman other than his wife, his daughter or his sister.

Shortly after the hasty marriage ceremony, two of Arap Mibe's friends, one a young man and the other very old, undertook to make formal apology (*nyoetap gat*, see p. 114) to Arap Matooe.

Appendix XIII

THE ORIGIN OF COOKING (*see Chapter XIV*)

"Long ago people did not know how to cook. They ground grain, mixed it with a little water and then left it to soak, as we do today when we make beer. A childless woman, who was desperately anxious to have a child, undertook to look after a neighbour who was about to have a baby. When she was preparing food for the mother to be, the childless woman thought to herself: 'If I put this food on the fire and then give it to her, it will probably make her so ill that she will die and then I shall keep her child.' So she cooked the food after preparing it in the usual way and gave it to the woman, who presently began to sweat. After looking at the sweating woman, the childless one said to herself: 'She is ill already! I will go to the field so that when she is dead I can return and say: 'I wonder how she died?'.

When she reached the field she saw that the sun was very hot and the ground very dry, so she pulled out the bracken from the other woman's crop and used it to shade her own. When she returned home she found that her patient was still alive, so on the next day she boiled the food in the same way and gave it to the expectant mother. Although boiled food was given to the patient every day, she got fatter and fatter until all the neighbours remarked on it. First one tasted the boiled food and then another, until they agreed the food was good; in this way they learned to cook the grain for food.

After the woman had given birth to her child, she went to see her field and found that her crop was excellent and ripe, for the woman who had nursed her had weeded it; the latter's field, on the other hand, had been spoiled by the bracken. The mother was so grateful she gave a part of her field to the woman who had tended her."

APPENDIX XIV

A KIPSIGIS BLESSING (KABERURET) (*see Chapter XV*)

The old man's chant	**The response**
Emoni ! Paybay, ole paybay !	*Paybay !*
Komi boisiek ! Paybay, ole paybay !	*Paybay !*
Komi chebiosok ! Paybay, ole paybay !	*Paybay !*
Ngotwekap murenik ! Purge, ole purge !	*Purge !*
Ikondit ! Chee, ole chee !	*Chee !*
Ireutap lagok, ule inde karik ! Purge, ole purge !	*Purge !*
Tuchon koam suswek ! Ees, ole ees !	*Ees !*
Tuchon koam ngenda ! Ees, ole ees !	*Ees !*
Tuchon koee peek ! Ees, ole ees !	*Ees !*
Chebiosok che bendi siguyo ! Mie, ole mie !	*Mie !*
Koima ! Purge, ole purge !	*Purge !*
Njor ! Purge, ole purge !	*Purge !*
Emoni kim ole kim !	*Kim !*
King ole king !	*King !*

The literal translation is: 'This country! Happy, say happy! (Happy!); And the old men! Happy, say happy! (Happy!); And the old women! Happy, say happy! (Happy!); The warriors' spears! Warm, say warm! (Warm!); The war horn! Sound, say sound! (Sound!); The children's *ireut*, where the weapons are kept! Warm, say warm! (Warm!); Those cattle when they eat grass! Flourish, say flourish! (Flourish!); Those cattle when they eat the salt lick! Flourish, say flourish! (Flourish!); Those cattle when they drink water! Flourish, say flourish! (Flourish!); The old women who go to a birth! Good, say good! (Good!); *Koima !* Warm, say warm! (Warm!); Njor! Warm, say warm! (Warm); This country strong, say strong! (Strong!); Amen, say Amen! (Amen!).

Although the normal meaning of *purge* is 'warm', it has many different meanings in this blessing. *Koima* and *Njor* are the names of the western and eastern halves of the house respectively (see p. 84). The literal meaning of *king* is 'may it mature', from the ordinary stem of the verb to mature, *kong*.

APPENDIX XV

HOMICIDE STORIES (*see Chapter XVIII*)

A child fell into a river and was being carried away by the current. A relative, who was standing on the bank, saw that the child was lost and shouted to a man nearby: "You have a bow and arrow, shoot him rather than let the water take him, as he must die." Without thinking the man with the bow shot the boy in haste and blood was seen to stain the water. The man became a *rumindet* and had to pay the compensation of nine head of cattle to the clan to which the child belonged.

* * *

A very poor man had no daughters but seven sons. As he had no daughters, there was no prospect of him receiving any marriage cattle for his sons to use for their marriages and he himself had no stock to use for this purpose. So he said to his sons one evening: "Let us go and steal some of Anum's cattle, for he is a rich man." When the sons had gone to sleep, the father took the steel heads off their arrows and replaced the arrows in their quivers.

When the robbers came to Anum's cattle kraal in the early hours of the morning, the owner heard them and came out, so that the robbers tried to run away. Their father shouted to them: "Don't run away, kill him!" As their arrows had no heads the sons could not kill the rich man, though they did not know this.

The cattle owner and his friends exclaimed: "They are shooting at us and mean to kill us." He ran after the robbers and speared one of them. When the others realised their arrows were useless they ran away. Later the father returned and claimed the cattle as compensation for the loss of his son, so in time the remaining sons were able to marry.

* * *

An old widow woman, who had only a son left, was so poor that she had no cattle for him to marry with. One day she told him to go and shoot a bushbuck. When the skin had been stretched and dried, the old woman made it into a *koliget* cloak. After she had told her son to go and warn the neighbours that buck were eating their crops, she put on the cloak and went to a nearby field, where she crouched in the scrub on the border of the cultivation. She moved about slowly in a stooping position as if searching for vegetables. Presently one of the neighbours saw what he thought was a bushbuck feeding, shot it with an arrow and then found the old woman lying dead in the bush. He had to pay the compensation cattle so the dead widow's son was able to marry.

Appendix XVI

THE CURSE (*see Chapter XIX*)

An old woman and her young married daughter took a dislike to a certain family, who had rejected the proposal of marriage made to one of their daughters by the old woman's son. The girl, who was the cause of this hostility, subsequently married and very soon afterwards became ill. She and her mother accused the disappointed family of having bewitched her. As the persons accused were known in the neighbourhood as upright honest people, the neighbours demanded that proof of the *panisiet* should be adduced, or that talk of witchcraft should cease. The accusers undertook to make the accusation under oath (*keyai mumek*). The statement was to be sworn before the smith's bellows, which is considered to be one of the severest forms of oath and one which is attended with the most dreadful curse. As there happened to be a forge in the district owned by a smith of Masai descent, the accusers went to him to make the accusation. Speaking as the mouthpiece of the bellows, he warned them repeatedly of the dreadful danger of lying to the bellows and that, if they made a false accusation, disaster would spread throughout their family.

They were not deterred by this warning and accused the four members of the family they disliked of witchcraft before the bellows. Within a week the daughter, one of the accusers, died; soon after her father, husband of the elder accuser, died; within a few days his son by another wife died; finally the son's wife and his mother, the co-wife of the elder accuser, died. All these deaths occurred within six weeks of the oath-taking. Some three months later a young male relative was killed by a fall of rock in a salt cave and soon after his wife gave birth to a stillborn, deformed child, a very serious occurrence amongst the Kipsigis. This was not the end of the disasters sustained by the accusing family, whereas the family they had accused continued to prosper.

This series of coincidences shows how the belief in the curse is upheld. It is not known what the various people died of, but this is of little importance as the deaths were attributed to the curse.

Appendix XVII

EXAMPLES OF WITCHCRAFT (*see Chapter XIX*)

A woman left her house one morning to go down to the stream to fetch water and on her way she met nobody but a small child. After she had returned to the house, she was taken violently ill with pains in the stomach and died in three

hours. The people who were with her when she died swore they saw a lizard (*chemelmogit*) leap from her mouth. (The belief that a snake or lizard eats the stomach and at death jumps from the mouth in some cases of *panisiet* is widespread.)

* * *

A woman who had been ailing slightly for some time was lying down near her house, when several women came to visit her. When she retired into the house she became very ill and *panisiet* was suspected. Her body was searched and a number of bits of the prickly shells of the castor oil plant fruit were found sticking in her back. She was bathed very thoroughly to remove all dirt (*simdo*) and she recovered. One of her visitors was found to be a young woman, who was believed to have bewitched several persons on previous occasions.

* * *

A woman was stricken with a violent and sudden sickness and it was found that a number of hairs, like long thistle prickles, were embedded in her navel. This was attributed to a girl whose mother had a reputation for practising witchcraft.

Appendix XVIII

EXAMPLES OF SAGEYUWEK (*see Chapter XIX*)

A *Chebsageyot* had the following dream: "I met a man (spirit) who said to me: 'Very soon some people are coming to consult you. They are wondering whether to go to a *Chebsageyot* who lives at Cheblel, to Neb Arap Temuge or to come to you. One of them is my wife and the other is her sister. Since my death my relations have been unkind to her and she is in trouble and ill. My brother, her *kipkondit*, is not at fault as he is kind to her, but his wife (her *siet*) is jealous and the two women are always quarrelling. They quarrelled over the milk recently, so that one of the three cows dried up. It is not my wife's fault, so tell her to pray to God (*Asista*) and thank God she is not to blame for the quarrels. Tell her also to take some milk and give it to the dry cow, that is sprinkle it on its back. She is to speak to the cow kindly and to pray, so that she may recover from the illness which has been caused by the quarrelling. Let the *kipkondit* pray too and the *siet* if she will."

Two weeks later two women arrived at the *Chebsageyot*'s house. They were strangers to her but as soon as they said they had come from Chebyes, the *Chebsageyot* knew they were the women the spirit had told her about as he had said they lived at Chebyes. She manipulated the *wimbi* and cowrie shell in the usual manner and bit by bit the whole story, as given by the spirit in the dream, was told. The visitors said that every word was true and that they had even approached the houses of the other two *Chebsageynik* mentioned by the spirit. The *Chebsageyot* gave the visitors the instructions given her by the spirit.

* * *

A spirit appeared to a *Chebsageyot* in a dream and said: "My brother's sheep and goats are dying and he wonders why." When he was asked why the stock were dying, the spirit replied: "It is I who am killing them, because he still dislikes me. Tell him to sprinkle them with milk, to give one to me and to pray to *Asista*."

Presently the man's wife arrived at the *Chebsageyot*'s house and asked if someone had bewitched the flock. She was told what the spirit had related to the *Chebsageyot* and what her husband had to do to appease his brother's anger. At sunrise the man prayed at the *mabwaita* and gave a sheep to his dead brother. The sheep is not sacrificed but is dedicated to the deceased as a token of good will and a little beer and milk are poured at the foot of the *mabwaita*.

"I met an old woman (a spirit) who told me that a child was ill, a child of a man of her clan. Its limbs were contorted and it could not move. The father had killed a snake. When I asked the old woman why the child was ill she answered: 'I have made it so because the people of our clan disliked me and were unkind to me.' 'But why', I said, 'were you unkind to the innocent child?' 'So that those who had been unkind to me should also experience trouble', replied the old woman. 'But if you can cure it you will, though I do not much care if you don't. The mother will bring the child to you, I expect.' The spirit told me of certain medicines, but said I must do as I thought best. She told me that the mother and everyone were saying that the child had been bewitched. 'This is not so. It is I who made her ill,' she said."

When the child was brought to the *Chebsageyot*, it was horrible to look at. Its body was stiffened in a permanent contortion with its arms behind its back, its nails cutting into the palms, its feet twisted inwards, its neck bent back and its teeth grinding. It had been in this condition for three months and had been kept alive on milk. The mother was told it was not a case of witchcraft and that it was useless to make beer and sacrifice a sheep, as others had instructed her to do. The child was rubbed with certain herbs, given medicine orally and a few of the inevitable charms. Gradually it recovered and after three months of treatment its limbs were supple again. During the whole period of the treatment, the *Chebsageyot* was moved by great compassion for the child. When success attended her efforts her chief thought was that the matter should be kept secret, lest she be called upon too frequently to help in cases of unknown illness.

* * *

"I met Arap Too one day at the house of Magerer. He had gone quite deaf, so that he could just hear if one spoke carefully in his ear. Though it is not right for a woman to be so forward, I could not help telling him that I knew what was the matter, as I had heard all about it in a dream from his deceased mother and elder brother. Arap Too's sister, who is living with him (that is, in a house close by) as her husband is dead, is very selfish and mean. When a friend wanted to borrow a fine cloak for a wedding she would not lend it, although her brother wished her to do so. When a woman relative was confined she would not give her milk, although instructed by her brother to do so. When her brother told her to give a little honey to a sick person, she refused to comply with his request. The result was that the brother and sister were always quarrelling.

The mother's spirit was angry with her daughter on this account and said 'My daughter is a bad woman and I will not have her continually quarrelling with my son and bringing trouble upon him. I would rather call my son to come to me in the spirit world.' Arap Too's deafness was understood to be the first step towards calling his spirit to his mother, as his sister would not desist from her meanness."

Brother and sister were told by the *Chebsageyot* to offer a sheep, dedicated to their mother, together at the *mabwaita*, to sprinkle milk on the *mabwaita* and to pray to God that there should be an end to their quarrelling. They took the *Chebsageyot's* words to heart as they both were convinced that their mother and brother were grieved and angry. They carried out the instructions given them and Arap Too's deafness disappeared completely.

* * *

The following simple case of a vision foretelling future events refers to the very rare occurrence of a murder among the Kipsigis. About seven o'clock one Tuesday morning, a *Chebsageyot* was so disturbed by a vision she had had during the night that she narrated the dream to her neighbours: "I am afraid something dreadful is going to happen; perhaps someone will be killed, but I don't know who it is. I saw three people quarrelling, one of whom was a man armed with a spear. There were two other people, one of whom had a knife but I could not see them clearly, as it was dark. They were near the hut across the river where the warriors slaughter their meat."

About ten o'clock the next morning, the police arrived to look for a man who had committed a murder. Their account of the incident was that on the Tuesday night a man had attempted to kill his wife in a hut about a mile-and-a-half from where the *Chebsageyot* lived. He was alone in the hut with his wife and his wife's sister. He was armed with a spear and his wife had a knife. As he tried to catch hold of his wife, he cut his hand on the knife and she fled from the house. The husband 'saw red' and killed the other woman instead. As the hut was dark except for the firelight, the figures would not be clearly visible in the vision. The *Chebsageyot* had wrongly stated the site of the occurrence, but this was probably owing to the fact she had been working for several days in her field, which was near to the butchery hut, and her attention had been fixed on that place.

the KIPSIGIS

.HISTORY

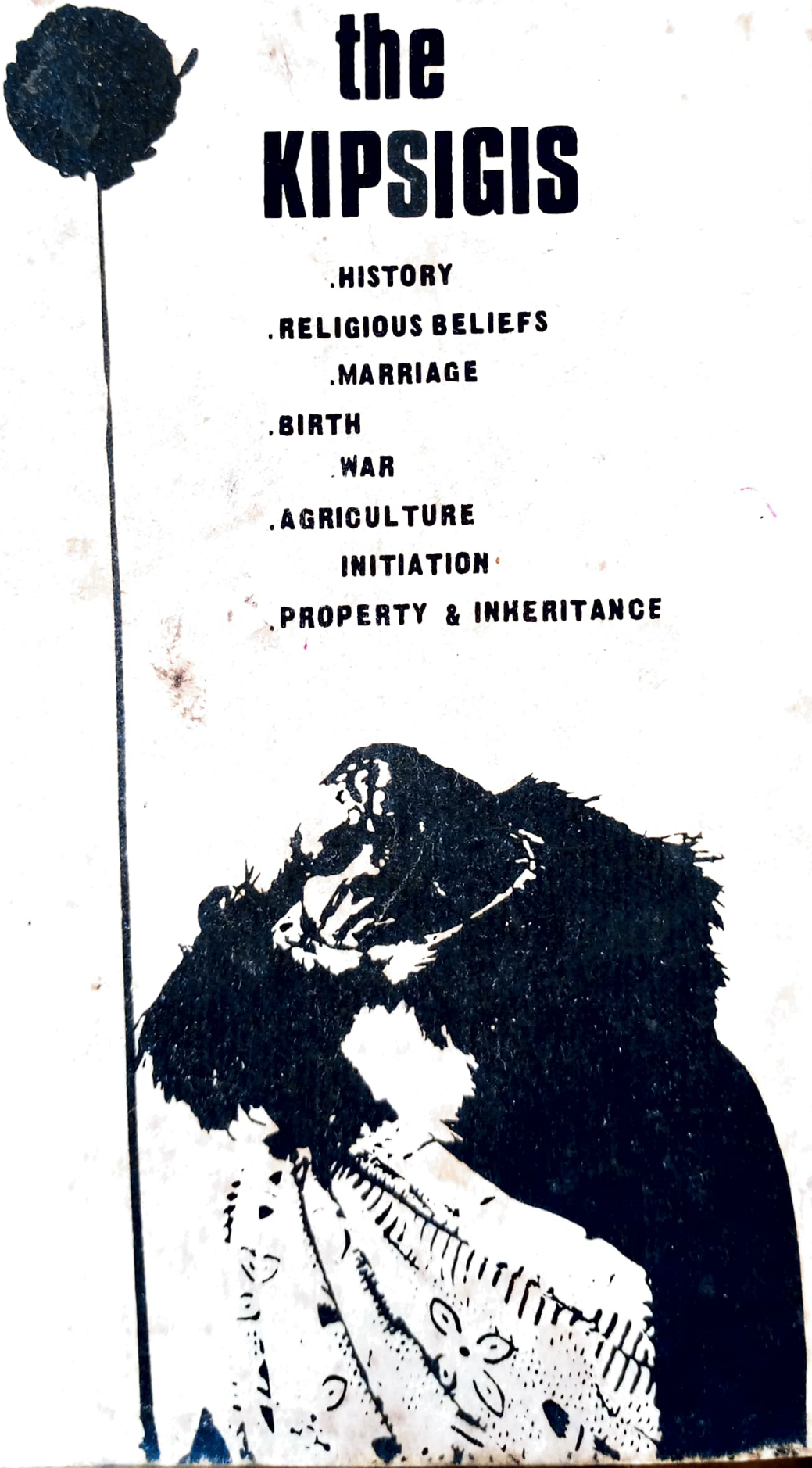
.RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

.MARRIAGE

.BIRTH

.WAR

.AGRICULTURE

.INITIATION

.PROPERTY & INHERITANCE